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LITERATURE AND FILM
LITTÉRATURE ET FILM
LITERATURĂ ȘI FILM

In the frame of the generous "Literature and Film" subject, the 32nd issue (2/2023) of AIC hosts a spectrum of highly topical themes, such as: migration, race, the East-West divide, the American dream and its deconstruction, social constraint and abuse, trauma and horror (related to Holocaust and war), journeys across time and space, identity (seen as a new "final frontier"). The adaptation of the written text to the visual medias, implying both converging and diverging tendencies between the semiotic codes, remains the main focus of the contributions within the volume. Meanwhile, other concerns and perspectives on the relationship between literature and film are advanced: the paper (literature) – stage (theatre) – screen (cinema) triad and its im-/complications, the writing – filming/ directing interconnectedness, the dialogue among arts (literature, cinema, theatre, but also music and painting), the use of data mining tools for textual analysis and, last but not least, the appeal to literature and film in foreign language teaching. From the Middle Ages to the Remote Future, passing through the Baroque, the Victorian Epoch, the World War and the Postcolonial periods; from the narrative poem to the Elizabethan drama and further from the 19th and 20th century novel up to the cyberpunk rhapsody and other SF subgenres, the present issue brings together literary, film and cultural studies, semiotics, philosophy and digital humanities.

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Dans les cadres du généreux sujet « Littérature et film », le 32e numéro (2/2023) de l'AIC s'attaque à des thèmes très actuels, tels : la migration, la race, le fossé Est-Ouest, le rêve américain et sa déconstruction, les contraintes et les abus sociaux, le trauma et l'horreur (associés à l'Holocauste et à la guerre), les voyages à travers le temps et l'espace, l'identité (présentée comme une nouvelle « frontière finale »). L'adaptation du texte écrit aux médias visuels, impliquant à la fois des tendances convergentes et divergentes entre les codes sémiotiques, reste le point central des contributions qui composent ce volume. Parallèlement, d'autres préoccupations et perspectives sur la relation entre la littérature et le cinéma sont avancées : la triade papier (littérature) – scène (théâtre) – écran (cinéma) et ses im-/complications, l'interconnexion écriture – filmage/ mise en scène, le dialogue entre les arts (littérature, cinéma, théâtre, mais aussi musique et peinture), l'extraction de texte et l'analyse informatisée des données textuelles et, enfin, l'appel à la littérature et au cinéma dans l'enseignement des langues étrangères. Du Moyen Âge à l'avenir lointain, en passant par le baroque, l'ère victorienne, les guerres mondiales et la période postcoloniale ; du poème narratif au drame élisabéthain et, plus loin, du roman des XIXe et XXe siècles jusqu'à la rhapsodie cyberpunk et à d'autres sous-genres de la SF, le présent numéro fait réunir les études littéraires, cinématographiques et culturelles, la sémiotique, la philosophie et les humanités numériques.

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În cadrele generosului subiect „Literatură și film", cel de-al 32-lea număr (2/2023) al revistei AIC abordează o serie de teme de mare actualitate, precum: migrația, rasa, prăpastia Est-Vest, visul american și deconstrucția acestuia, constrângerea și abuzul social, trauma și oroarea (asociate Holocaustului și războiului), călătoria în timp și spațiu, identitatea (înfățișată ca o nouă „frontieră finală"). Adaptarea textului scris la mediile vizuale, implicând atât tendințe convergente, cât și divergente între codurile semiotice, rămâne punctul central al contribuțiilor din cadrul volumului. În același timp, sunt avansate și alte preocupări și perspective privitoare la relația dintre literatură și film: triada hârtie (literatură) – scenă (teatru) – ecran (cinema) și im-/complicațiile sale, interconexiunea scriere – filmare/ regie, dialogul dintre arte (literatură, cinema, teatru, dar și muzică și pictură), utilizarea instrumentelor de *data mining* pentru analiza textuală și, nu în ultimul rând, apelul la literatură și film în predarea limbilor străine. Din Evul Mediu până în viitorul îndepărtat, trecând prin baroc, Epoca Victoriană, Războaiele Mondiale și perioada post-colonială; de la poemul narativ la dramaturgia elisabetană și, mai departe, de la romanul secolelor al XIX-lea și al XX-lea până la rapsodia cyberpunk și la alte sub-genuri SF, acest număr aduce împreună studiile literare, cinematografice și culturale, semiotica, filozofia și științele umaniste digitale.

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Miguel, le nouveau Dante : voyage entre le film d'animation *Coco* et le poème dantesque

Miguel, the New Dante: Journey Between the Animation Film *Coco* and Dante's Poem

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Mots-clés

***Coco* ; Dante Alighieri ; *La Divine Comédie* ; Disney Pixar ; film d'animation ; littérature.**

En 2017, est sorti dans les salles le film d'animation chez Disney et Pixar *Coco*. L'action se déroule autour de la fête mexicaine du *Día de los Muertos* et le héros, Miguel, face à une crise personnelle et familiale commence un voyage initiatique dans l'au-delà. Les précédentes analyses de cette pellicule ont mis en point d'honneur sur deux principaux aspects : la dimension culturelle liée à la célébration de cette fête mexicaine, ainsi que le rôle fondamental de la famille. Ici, nous souhaitons démontrer un lien plus intrinsèque, celui avec la littérature, notamment avec la *Divine Comédie* de Dante Alighieri. À la suite de la visualisation du film, nous avons pu identifier et analyser cinq personnages, cinq lieux et scènes, enfin, extraire trois thématiques. L'analyse suivante se compose d'une constante comparaison des similitudes entre le film et le poème. Grâce aux résultats obtenus, nous avons suggéré l'importance de conduire des études analogues sur ce même film ou autres films pour observer le lien entre notre arrière-plan littéraire, en particulier du Moyen Âge, et le cinéma.

Keywords

***Coco*; Dante *Alighieri; The Divine Comedy*; Disney Pixar; animated film; literature.**

In 2017 Disney and Pixar released the animated film *Coco*. The story revolves around the Mexican festivity *Día de los Muertos*, when the main character, Miguel Rivera, following a personal and familiar crisis, begins a journey in the afterlife. While the majority of the existing studies concerns mainly the cultural perspective of the festivity and the fundamental role of family, the aim of this paper is to demonstrate a more intrinsic relation, that is the one between the film and literature, especially with the Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*. The analysis begins with the observations about five characters, then moves to five places and scenes, and finally concludes with three topics. Each of these aspects is compared to the Italian poem. The results lead to the importance of proposing further studies on the same film, or other films, in order to observe the relationship between the literary background, especially the medieval one, and cinema.

Introduction

L'importance de la famille est le thème principal du film d'animation *Coco* produit par les studios Disney et Pixar, réalisé par Lee Unkrich et Adrian Molina et sorti dans les salles en 2017. Le héros de ce film est le jeune mexicain Miguel, un enfant de douze ans qui aime la musique. Malheureusement, dans sa famille c'est interdit de jouer et de chanter, il garde alors son rêve caché. Un jour, il réalise qu'il est temps de révéler au monde ses qualités de musicien et de réaliser son rêve. Toutefois, pour cela, il doit s'éloigner de sa famille. C'est le jour de la Fête des Morts et en s'enfuyant il rencontre sa famille de l'au-delà. En surmontant une série d'aventures, il mène un parcours initiatique qui le pousse à mieux se connaître et se comprendre soi-même.

La critique cinématographique, tout comme certaines études (Diah et al., 2021) prennent tout particulièrement en considération trois éléments de ce récit cinématographique en les mettant en relation entre eux : la famille, la musique et la mémoire. Ces trois aspects ont été analysés dans leur relation avec une cérémonie qui prend une place particulière dans la culture et la société mexicaine, *Los días de Los Muertos*. La famille, surtout dans le contexte de la culture latino-américaine, est à la base de la société entière. Miguel aime sa famille, mais elle lui empêche de poursuivre son rêve, ce qui le pousse à rejeter ses pairs. Pourtant le récit est entièrement et constamment parcouru par cette notion. Cet élément omniprésent n'a pas une grande signification pour le petit spectateur, mais à travers une vision plus attentive il apparaît, de toute évidence, que malgré la difficulté qu'il peut y avoir à entretenir ses relations familiales, elle sera toujours là pour nous soutenir. L'autre grande aspect, exemplifié par l'un des symboles Mexicain, les *mariachis*, c'est la musique, qui représente les aspirations, les buts personnels. En effet Miguel abandonne sa famille et commence une 'quête' pour la musique, qui se transformera plus tard en 'quête' de la famille. Avec ce mouvement circulaire entre ces deux thématiques le film nous démontre comment la sphère la plus personnel et intime, celle du 'je', représentée par ses propres désires, est toujours en contact avec la sphère externe la plus proche, celle de la famille. Enfin la mémoire, à travers laquelle nous devons nous souvenir de nos ancêtres.

Toutefois, si dans la culture mexicaine, pendant *Los días de los muertos*, notre famille de l'au-delà retourne sur la terre nous rendre visite, dans la pellicule c'est bien le héros qui part pour le royaume des enfers. D'une part, cela nous rappelle le voyage affronté par Saint Paul dans l'écrit apocryphe *Visio Sancti Pauli* et mentionné dans 2 *Cor.* 12, 2-4, alors que, de l'autre, on y retrouve surtout un thème strictement lié à la littérature : celui d'Ulysse dans l'*Odyssée* d'Homère, Enée dans l'*Enéide* de Virgile ou bien de Dante Alighieri dans sa *Comédie*. C'est avec ce dernier que l'on retrouve le plus de relations : de personnages, de scènes et de thématiques ; par conséquence, notre étude se concentrera sur les liens entre le film d'animation et le poème dantesque.

Méthodologie

D'un point de vue méthodologique, nous avons commencé par le visionnage du film d'animation, à ce propos nous avons regardé la version anglaise ainsi que celle italienne. Ce choix a été prise en compte respectivement parce que la première version est celle de la langue de la maison de production alors que la deuxième sert à saisir des éventuels liens entre le poème et la traduction de la pellicule.

Comme deuxième étape, nous avons retracé les chants de la *Comédie* qui peuvent être en relation avec la caractérisation des personnages, les scènes et le lieu du film et du poème, ainsi

que les thèmes communs. Suite à la prise en compte de tous ces éléments, nous apportons les résultats de notre analyse avec les citations en langue original.

Miguel comme nouveau Dante et les autres personnages

Nous allons découvrir cinq personnages du film qui nous montrent un rapport avec des personnages de la *Comédie*.

Miguel Rivera est le héros du film et nous pouvons aisément l'associer à Dante au début de son voyage dans les trois royaumes, Dante *agens*[1]. En effet, Miguel est pris d'une crise existentielle, tiraillé entre sa famille et son rêve de devenir musicien. Crise que nous pouvons assimiler à celle ressentie de Dante dans l'incipit, *Enf.* I, vv. 1-3 : « Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita / mi ritrovai per una selva oscura, / ché la diritta via era smarrita ».

Dans le film, il y a un chien, le xoloitzcuintle, chien nu typique du Mexique appelé Dante, qui accompagne toujours Miguel. Sa fonction d'acolyte et de guide se révèle dès sa première apparition : Miguel est en train d'aller vers *Mariachi plaza* et en passant devant de nombreux étals, l'un d'entre eux vend des jouets d'*alebrijes* et tout de suite nous rencontrons Dante sortant d'une poubelle ; cette séquence est construite de façon que on puisse percevoir le lien *alebrijes*-Dante. Le rôle de ces créatures est bien illustré quand Miguel est avec sa famille sur le pont vers l'au-delà.

> MIGUEL: Are those…? *Alebrijes*! Those are --
> TÍO OSCAR: REAL *alebrijes*. Spirit Creatures …
> TÍA ROSITA: They guide souls on their journey …[2]

Cependant, il y a une rencontre qui est bien plus significative, celle avec Frida Kahlo. Elle reconnait tout de suite Dante, même s'il reste un fond de doute.

> FRIDA: Oh, the mighty Xolo dog...! Guider of wandering spirits...! (*beat*) And whose spirit have you guided to me?
> (*Frida takes a closer look at Miguel.*)
> MIGUEL: I don't think he's a spirit guide.
> FRIDA: Ah-ah-ah. The *alebrijes* of this world can take many forms... They are as mysterious as they are powerful...
> (*The patterns on Frida's monkey swirl and he opens his mouth to breath a blue fire. He fumbles at the end with a chesty cough. Then they look to Dante, who is chewing his own leg. Suddenly, Frida turns back to Miguel.*)
> FRIDA (CONT'D): Or maybe he's just a dog.

[1] Cela est une spécifié de l'allégorie dantesque, c'est-à-dire que à travers la mémoire l'*auctor* (narrateur) s'engage tellement en profondeur avec l'*agens* qu'il essaie de vivre à nouveau sentiment et pensée du moment dans lequel ce sont passé (Mangieri, 2021).

[2] Ici, nous rencontrons deux personnages de la famille qui n'ont pas un rapport avec des personnages de la *Comédie*, tout comme d'autres personnages du film. Miguel dans l'au-delà rencontre, outre à Mamá Imelda, Tío Oscar et Tío Felipe qui sont les frères gemmaux de Mamá Imelda, Papá Julio est le mari de Coco et arrière-grand-père de Miguel, Tía Rosita est sa sœur, Tía Victoria est la sœur de Elena, la grand-mère de Miguel.

En plus, sa fonction de guide nous est montrée de façon fortuite, il faut penser aux rencontres entre Miguel et sa famille de l'au-delà, ou bien avec Héctor, dans les deux cas Dante commence à courir en amenant le petit héros face à ces personnages.

Cet animal pourrait être vu comme réincarnation du poète lui-même, en premier lieu pour le nom ; en second lieu, parce qu'il devient un guide pour Miguel, comme s'il connaissait déjà les enfers. C'est le rôle de Dante *auctor*, il écrit la *Comédie* pour diffuser la connaissance de ce qui se passe après la mort, son poème devient une mise en garde pour les hommes, Dante Alighieri *Epistola XIII*, 39 :

> Il fine di tutta l'opera e della parte potrebbe essere anche molteplice, cioè vicino e lontano; ma tralasciata una ricerca così sottile, si può dire in breve che il fine di tutta l'opera e della parte consiste nell'allontanare quelli che vivono questa vita dallo stato di miseria e condurli a uno stato di felicità.

Si bien que dans le dernier chant du poème, *Paradis* XXXIII, Dante prie Dieu de lui donner une mémoire telle qu'il puisse raconter tout ce qu'il a vu pendant son voyage, comme symbole du triomphe de Dieu, vv. 70-75 :

> E fa la lingua mia tanto possente,
> ch'una favilla sol de la tua gloria
> possa lasciare a la futura gente;
>
> ché, per tornare alquanto a mia memoria
> e per sonare un poco in questi versi,
> più si conceperà di tua vittoria.

Nous rencontrons un autre acolyte, Héctor, qui est le double de Virgile, le guide du héros du poème dantesque. Héctor assume un rôle didactique pour Miguel, en lui enseignant ce qui se passe dans l'au-delà. Un autre point en commun entre Virgile et Héctor est le fait que Virgile se situe dans les Limbes[3], *Enfer* II, v. 52 : « Io era tra color che son sospesi ». Donc dans une situation désagréable par rapport aux âmes du paradis et même du purgatoire ; comme Héctor n'a personne qui se souvient de lui à travers l'*ofrenda*, il risque d'être oublié, il ne vit donc pas en paix :

> HÉCTOR: Eh, in a way… We're all the ones with no photos or ofrendas, no family to go home to. Nearly forgotten, you know?

Mamá Imelda, l'arrière-arrière-grand-mère de Miguel, en tant que femme est la représentation de Beatrice. Imelda est très sévère avec Miguel, elle est tout le temps en train de gronder son arrière-arrière-petit-fils :

> MAMÁ IMELDA: I give you my blessing.
> (*The marigold petal glows in her fingers. Miguel brightens. But Mamá Imelda is not finished.*)
> MAMÁ IMELDA (CONT'D): I give you my blessing to go home...

[3] Les limbes (chant IV, vv. 33-39) sont le lieu où réside les enfants qui n'ont pas eu baptême et les païens illustres, ils restent suspendus là en espérant de pouvoir un jour voir Dieu.

(*The glow of the marigold petal surges.*)
MAMÁ IMELDA (CONT'D): To put my photo back on the *ofrenda*...
(*Each added condition makes the petal glow brighter. Imelda delivers it like a scolding, but Miguel nods.*)
MAMÁ IMELDA (CONT'D): And to never play music again! [...]
MAMÁ IMELDA: Two seconds and you already break your promise! […]
MAMÁ IMELDA: Don't make this hard, *mijo*. You go home my way, or no way.
MIGUEL: You really hate music that much?
MAMÁ IMELDA: I will not let you go down the same path he did. […]
MAMÁ IMELDA: This nonsense ends now, Miguel! I am giving you my blessing and you are going home! […]
MAMÁ IMELDA (CONT'D): We each made a sacrifice to get what we wanted. Now you must make a choice.

Également Beatrice au paradis terrestre dit à Dante qu'il ne doit pas pleurer pour l'absence de Virgile, mais plutôt pour des autres blessures, et pour son comportement elle est comparée à un amiral, *Purgatoire* XXX, vv. 55-60 :

"Dante, perché Virgilio se ne vada,
non pianger anco, non piangere ancora ;
ché pianger ti conven per altra spada"

Quasi ammiraglio che in poppa e in prora
viene a veder la gente che ministra
per li altri legni, e a ben far l'incora

Cela se situe au début de la réprimande qu'elle lui fait et qui se déroule dans les deux chants du *Purgatoire* XXX-XXXI, comme nous le verrons en détail plus tard.

Le dernier personnage que nous allons présenter est l'antagoniste, Ernesto De La Cruz. Il est néanmoins difficile de l'associer à un seul personnage de la *Comédie*. Nous découvrons qu'initialement De La Cruz est un assassin, ainsi nous pourrions le rencontrer dans le VIIème cercle de l'*Enfer* (chant XII) où il y a les tyrans et assassins. Une autre possibilité est celle de le localiser au IXème cercle (chant XXXII) parmi les traitres de la famille, puisque Ernesto trahi Héctor et décide de le tuer. Enfin, nous pourrions penser que De La Cruz soit l'un des personnages du dernier chant (XXXIV), c'est-à-dire Brutus en tant que traitre et assassin. Cette dernière association pourrait être confirmée par une phrase prononcée par Héctor lorsqu'il comprend que Ernesto De La Cruz l'a assassiné, « How could you ?» dans l'original anglais, et qui fait écho à la célèbre phrase que Jules César, en point de mort, adresse à Brutus : « tu quoque, Brute, fili mi ? ».

Scènes et cantiques

Au-delà des personnages que nous venons de présenter, dans le film il y a beaucoup de scènes qui nous rappellent l'architecture des royaumes dantesques, ici nous allons analyser quatre lieux symboliques.

La première scène, c'est lorsque Miguel traverse le pont de pétales de calendule qui mène dans l'au-delà et à la fin du pont il y a des contrôles, une sorte de douane. C'est le double du

chant III de l'*Enfer* dans lequel Dante traverse le fleuve Achéron et se trouve face au gardien infernal, Charon.

Secondement, Dante dans son voyage procède en entrant à travers la porte de l'enfer, chant III, vv. 1-9 :

> "Per me si va ne la città dolente,
> per me si va ne l'etterno dolore,
> per me si va tra la perduta gente.
>
> Giustizia mosse il mio alto fattore;
> fecemi la divina podestate,
> la somma sapïenza e 'l primo amore.
>
> Dinanzi a me non fuor cose create
> se non etterne, e io etterno duro.
> Lasciate ogne speranza, voi ch'intrate".

Parallèlement nous pouvons trouver une scène dans le film, plus précisément lorsque Miguel et Héctor descendent un escalier et entrent dans une sorte de porte de pierre amenant au 'village' des âmes de ces qui sont en train d'être oubliées. Tant l'aspect extérieur de l'entrée, qui affiche des peintures de squelettes avec de sort d'ailes de feu, que la descente pour y arriver sont représentative de la descente aux enfers illustrée dans la *Comédie* de Dante.

Le troisième point que nous voulons observer est la tour dans laquelle vit Ernesto De La Cruz. Dans quatre scènes[4], Miguel se tourne et il entrevoit le sommet de la tour tout illuminée, qui semble un mirage paradisiaque. Comme il peut la voir de près, cela a une structure plus large à la base qui se serre en hauteur, donc elle devient plutôt la représentation du mont du purgatoire.

La scène de la grotte nous exemplifie les derniers chants du purgatoire, qui correspondent au paradis terrestre. En effet, nous voyons une petite colline dans ce lieu entouré d'eau, également sur le sommet du purgatoire nous trouvons deux fleuves le Léthé et l'Eunoè. De plus, la grotte possède une ouverture au-dessus qui fait entrer la lumière, indication qu'au niveau supérieur il y a le salut, c'est-à-dire le paradis. Cette scène commence avec la chute de Miguel dans la grotte, directement dans l'eau, immersion qu'il nous rappelle la baignade de Dante dans le fleuve Léthé, celui qui fait oublier les péchés commis. Puis, nous avons l'*anagnorisis*, le petit héros comprend que Héctor est son arrière-arrière-grand-père et nous voyons arriver au bord de l'ouverture supérieure Dante et Pepita, les deux *alebrijes*, l'un de Miguel et l'autre de Mamá Imelda, et Imelda elle-même. Pepita rougit et il pleut du haut de la grotte, cela nous fait penser au deuxième fleuve, l'Eunoè, qui sert à se souvenir des bonnes actions accomplies dans la vie. Ici nous pouvons constater une autre analogie, celle avec Beatrice et le griffon, pourtant les deux animaux sont différents, même si tous deux sont à

[4] La première scène où nous voyons la tour est quand un des musiciens de Frida Kahlo explique à Héctor e Miguel comment arriver à De La Cruz. La deuxième fois, Miguel se tourne à l'admirer pendant son chemin bas vers le Chicharron (ami de Héctor et âme condamnée à la disparition, puisque n'a personne qui prépare des *ofrendas* pour lui et il est en train d'être oublié). La troisième vision est dans la scène de la compétition musical. Enfin, la dernière fois que nous la voyons en distance c'est quand Miguel est dans la ruelle qui s'échappe de Mamá Imelda.

moitié félin et moitié aigle. Pepita est un énorme jaguar avec des cornes de bélier, des ailes et les pattes arrière d'aigle et une queue rayée semblable à celle d'un iguane ; tandis que le griffon dantesque a une moitié lion et aigle, *Purg.* XXIX v. 108 : « ch'al collo d'un grifon tirato venne », *Purg.* XXX v. 8 « venuta prima tra 'l grifone ed esso », *Purg.* XXXI, vv. 80-81 : « vider Beatrice volta in su la fiera / ch'è sola una persona in due nature », v. 113 : « al petto del grifon seco menarmi », v. 120 : « che pur sopra 'l grifone stavan saldi», v. 122 : « la doppia fiera dentro vi raggiava », *Purg.* XXXII v. 26 : « e 'l grifon mosse il bendetto carco », 43 : « Beato se', grifon, che non discindi », 89 : « li altri dopo 'l grifon sen vanno suso », 96 : « che legar vidi a la biforme fera ».

Le dernier lieu se trouve au sommet de la tour de Ernesto De La Cruz, ce lieu se double, car d'une coté il y a une ressemblance avec, à nouveau, le paradis terrestre, avec la rencontre familiale et le final du voyage dans l'au-delà, au moins pour Miguel. De l'autre cela est aussi le bas de l'enfer, puisque la scène de théâtre dans laquelle il doit interpréter De La Cruz est au fond d'une arène qui a la même structure que l'enfer, en forme d'entonnoir.

Thématiques

Après avoir analysé les relations entre le film d'animation et le poème, concernant les personnages et les scènes/lieux, dans la pellicule nous pouvons déterminer trois thématiques récurrentes, qui peuvent être le double de certaines parmi les innombrables de la *Comédie* dantesque.

Le premier thème est celui que nous avons abordé en parlant de Mamá Imelda, c'est-à-dire le rapprochement. Comme nous avons déjà montré ce personnage est presque tout le temps en train de gronder Miguel. Elle essaye de protéger son arrière-arrière-petit-fils et elle veut le renvoyer sur la terre, nous pouvons observer que son instinct de protection est causé de ce qu'elle pense être le mieux. Ce comportement de réprimande est analogue de celui de Beatrice envers Dante. En effet, après ce que nous avons cité ci-dessus, nous lisons, *Purg.* XXX, vv. 73-75 : « Guardaci ben ! Ben son, ben son Beatrice. / Come degnasti d'accedere al monte ? / non sapei tu che qui è l'uom felice ? ». Puis, dans le *Purg.* XXX, vv. 115-145, et *Purg.* XXXI, vv. 37-63 Beatrice observe comme Dante aurait potentiellement pu suivre « la diritta via » (*Enf.* I, v. 3) et qu'elle était pour lui comme une aide à la poursuite, mais le décès de Beatrice a causé la perdition de Dante. Donc, seul le voyage dans les trois royaumes de l'au-delà pourrait le sauver.

La deuxième thématique que nous rencontrons est celle de la connaissance. Dans le film nous pouvons observer que Miguel est constamment en train d'apprendre quelque chose, ou en posant des questions directes ou en les découvrant par hasards. Cette curiosité nous est montrée dès l'ouverture du film grâce à la voix off de Miguel :

> MIGUEL (V.O.): And the mamá...? She didn't have time to cry over that walkaway musician! […] And her little girl? […] My *Abuelita*? She's Mamá Coco's daughter. […] But me?

Ces premiers exemples sont tous extrait de la voix off, dans lequel le héros nous raconte l'histoire de sa famille, le préambule, et de son rêve.

> MIGUEL: Are those...? *Alebrijes*! But those are—

Ici, Miguel est en train de traverser le pont vers l'au-delà et en voyant les *alebrijes*, il demande à son défunt oncle s'il les a bien reconnus.

> MIGUEL: Wait... what happened?
> HÉCTOR: He's been forgotten. (*beat*) When there's no one left in the living world who remembers you, you disappear from this world. We call it the "Final Death".
> MIGUEL: Where did he go?
> HÉCTOR: No one knows.
> (Miguel has a thought.)

Dans ce dernier exemple Miguel et Héctor viennent d'assister à la mort finale du Chiccharrón, mais il faut avoir des éclaircissements à notre héros, puisqu'il ne comprend pas ce qu'il vient de voir. Pourtant, dans certains cas, le protagoniste arrive à découvrir fortuitement, par exemple : quand en essayant de ne pas faire tomber *las ofrendas*, le cadre avec la photo de Mamá Imelda tombe et se casse en dévoilant une autre partie de la photo avec un homme. Dans le troisième personnage caché Miguel reconnait son idole, Ernesto De La Cruz.

> MIGUEL: Dante! No, Dante, stop!
> (*Miguel pulls the dog away from the ofrenda, but the table shakes. The frame with Mamá Imelda's photo sways back and forth, then topples to the ground with a sickening crack.*)
> MIGUEL (CONT'D): No, no, no, no, no! No...
> (*Miguel picks up the old photo of Mamá Imelda, which unfolds to reveal another portion, hidden all these years; the man with no face is revealed to be holding a familiar skull-headed guitar.*)
> MIGUEL: De la Cruz's guitar...?
> MAMÁ COCO: Papá?
> (*Miguel turns, startled. Mamá Coco points a crooked finger at the picture in his hand.*)
> MAMÁ COCO (CONT'D): Papá?
> (*Miguel's eyes go wide as the connection dawns on him. Could it possibly be true?*)
> MIGUEL: Mamá Coco, is your papá... Ernesto de la Cruz?
> MAMÁ COCO: Papá! Papá!

Ou bien quand dans la grotte Miguel voit Héctor qui est en train d'atteindre sa mort finale et, tandis que Héctor parle de son grand regret ne pas être resté à Santa Cecilia et qu'il est en train d'être oublié par sa fille, Miguel comprend que son compagnon est lui-même son arrière-arrière-grand-père.

> HÉCTOR: Hhuuh!
> MIGUEL: Héctor! Héctor--
> HÉCTOR: She's... forgetting me.
> (*Miguel looks at Héctor with concern.*)
> MIGUEL: Who?
> HÉCTOR: My daughter...
> MIGUEL: She's the reason you wanted to cross the bridge...
> HÉCTOR: I just wanted to see her again... (*beat*) I never should have left Santa Cecilia. I wish I could apologize. I wish I could tell her that her papá was trying to come home. That he loved her so much. (*beat*) My Coco...

(*A chill runs through Miguel.*)
MIGUEL: Coco?
(*Miguel reaches into his hoodie and pulls out the photo of Imelda, Coco, and the faceless musician. Miguel shows the photo to Héctor. Héctor is confused; it's like he's seen a ghost.*)
HÉCTOR: Where... where did you get this?
MIGUEL: That's my Mamá Coco. That's my Mamá Imelda. Is that... you? Gears turn in both of their heads.
HÉCTOR: We're...
HÉCTOR: ...family?
MIGUEL: ...family?
(*Héctor is as shocked as Miguel. He looks at his great-great grandson.*)

Nous avons observé comment la curiosité de Miguel le pousse à connaitre la vérité. Ce rapport avec la connaissance nous pouvons la rencontre dans l'un des chants les plus célèbres, *Enf.* XXVI, connu comme le chant d'Ulysse. La partie en question commence au v. 85 et se déroule jusqu'à la fin du chant. La curiosité, ainsi que la soif de connaissance, de Ulysse nous est bien présenté, vv. 94-99 :

Né dolcezza di figlio, né la pietà
Del vecchio padre, né 'l debito amore
Lo qual dovea Penelopè far lieta,

vincer potero dentro a me l'ardore
ch'i' ebbi a divenir del mondo esperto
e de li vizi umani e del valore

Notamment dans le discours direct que le héros Homérique prononce aux compagnons pour les inciter au voyage, vv. 118-120 : « Considerate la vostra semenza : / fatti non foste a viver come bruti, / ma per seguir virtute e canoscenza ». Toutefois il émerge que cela est subordonné à une volonté supérieure, celle de Dieu, v. 141 : « e la prora ire in giù, com'altrui piacque ». Ce divin désir a été annoncé au début du poème, *Enf.* II (vv. 52-114), quand Dante porte l'exemple de voyage dans l'au-delà de Saint Paul et Énée. En se comparant à eux, il ne comprend pas pourquoi il devrait atteindre ce voyage, vv. 31-33 : « Ma io, perché venirvi ? o chi 'l concede / Io non Enëa, io non Paulo sono ; / ma degno a ciò né io né altri 'l crede». La volonté suprême de Dieu nous est transmise dans le final du poème, où Dante reçoit la lumière divine, *Par.* XXXIII, vv. 139-145 :

Ma non eran da ciò le proprie penne:
se non che la mia mente fu percossa
da un fulgore in che sua voglia venne.

A l'alta fantasia qui mancò possa;
ma già volgeva il mio disio e 'l velle,
sì come rota ch'igualmente è mossa,

l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle.

La dernière thématique est celle de la mémoire, omniprésente dans le film d'animation, notamment avec le thème de la famille. Ici, nous voyons une attention sur le souvenir des ancêtres, des défunts, et elle est extrêmement importante, parce que si quelqu'un n'a personne qui se souvient de lui, il aboutit à la mort finale, comme explique Héctor à Miguel face à la disparition du Chicharrón.

> HÉCTOR: He's been forgotten. (*beat*) When there's no one left in the living world who remembers you, you disappear from this world. We call it the "Final Death".

La mémoire est toujours présente, aussi puisque *Remember me* est une chanson récurrente. Cependant cette chanson a été écrite de Héctor pour Coco comme sorte d'amulette qui anéanti la séparation du père de sa fille en se souvenant toujours de lui.

> Remember me
> Though I have to say goodbye
> Remember me
> Don't let it make you cry
> For even if I'm far away I hold you
> in my heart
> I sing a secret song to you each night
> we are apart
> Remember me
> Though I have to travel far
> Remember me
> Each time you hear a sad guitar
> Know that I'm with you the only
> way that I can be
> Until you're in my arms again
> Remember me

Malheureusement, ce talisman ne fonctionne pas et nous pouvons voir au début de la pellicule, l'arrière-grand-mère de Miguel, Coco, à propos de laquelle nous est dit qu'elle a des soucis de mémoire.

> MIGUEL (V.O.): She's my great grandmother, Mamá Coco.
> (*A boy walks into frame and kisses her on the cheek. This is our narrator, MIGUEL.*)
> MIGUEL: Holá, Mamá Coco.
> MAMÁ COCO: How are you, Julio?
> MIGUEL (V.O.): Actually, my name is Miguel. Mamá Coco has trouble remembering things...

Contrairement aux difficultés à se souvenir Coco reste comme un héros secondaire. Grâce au voyage de Miguel, elle peut se souvenir de son passé et être capable de le raconter à la famille, donc son père peut survivre dans l'au-delà.

Comme affirme Lina Bolzoni (2008, 169-193), la *Comédie* à son fondement est un éloge de la mémoire : elle est apte à transmettre la culture et les personnages contemporains ; sa structure facilite la mémorisation ; les changements des temps verbaux nous montrent l'alternance entre Dante *agens* et *auctor*, celui qui vit à la première personne et celui qui vit à travers ses souvenirs. Ce même thème décliné de façon différente pourrait être reparti en trois catégories : mémoire des propres péchés, celle du rapport *agens-auctor* et celle des autres. La première catégorie (186-187) est celle dans laquelle le souvenir du péché peut devenir lui-même la peine, comme nous le démontre Francesca da Rimini dans le chant V de l'*Enfer*, vv. 121-123 : « E quella a me: "Nessun maggior dolore / che ricordarsi del tempo felice / ne la miseria; e ciò sa 'l tuo dottore. » ; mastro Adamo, faux-monnayeur, dans l'*Enf.* XXX, 64-69 :

> Li ruscelletti che d'i verdi colli
> del Casentin discendon giuso in Arno,
> faccendo i lor canali freddi e molli,
>
> sempre mi stanno innanzi, e non indarno,
> ché l'imagine lor vie più m'asciuga
> che 'l male ond'io nel volto mi discarno.

Ou bien le comte Ugolino, *Enf.* XXXIII, vv. 4-6 : « Poi cominciò: "Tu vuo' ch'io rinovelli / disperato dolor che 'l cor mi preme / già pur pensando, pria ch'io ne favelli » et qui exprime sa douleur pour le souvenir en disant au v. 9: « parlar e lagrimar vedrai insieme ». La deuxième catégorie prend en considération le rapport entre Dante *agens*, celui qui vit à la première personne le voyage, et Dante *auctor*, celui qui doit faire recours à sa mémoire pour écrire la *Comédie*. Quand Virgile se mit en colère contre Dante, il a une telle honte qu'il s'en souvient encore, *Enf.* XXX, vv. 133-135 : « Quand'io 'l senti' a me parlar con ira, / volsimi verso lui con tal vergogna, / ch'ancor per la memoria mi si gira » ; ou quand Dante n'est pas sûr de sa mémoire à propos de son désir de connaissance du motif du tremblement de terre, *Pur.* XX vv. 145-147 : « Nulla ignoranza mai con tanta guerra / mi fé desideroso di sapere, / se la memoria mia in ciò non erra » ; pendant tout le poème Dante a une constante peur que sa mémoire ne soit pas en mesure de bien se souvenir de ce qu'il voit pour pouvoir l'écrire après le voyage, cela arrive à son expression ultime dans le XXXIII et dernier chant du *Paradis*, vv. 55-75, mais puisque le voyage est voulu par Dieu, il lui donne la mémoire, vv. 139-145, mentionné ci-dessus. La dernière catégorie de mémoire est celle représentée par la mémoire des autres, le premier cas que nous présentons est celui de Ciacco qui prie Dante de le rappeler sur la terre des vivants, *Enf.* VI vv. 88-89 : « Ma quando tu sarai nel dolce mondo, / priegoti ch'a la mente altrui mi rechi ». Le second cas est celui de Forese Donati, peut-être le plus emblématique du rapport avec le film d'animation. En effet dans son chant, *Pur.* XXIII, Dante ne comprend pas comment il est possible que Forese soit déjà dans ce cadre, donc il lui explique que c'est grâce aux pleurs et prières de sa veuve qu'il a pu avancer si rapidement, vv. 85-96.

> Ond'elli a me: "Sì tosto m'ha condotto
> a ber lo dolce assenzo d'i martìri
> la Nella mia con suo pianger dirotto.
>
> Con suoi prieghi devoti e con sospiri

tratto m'ha de la costa ove s'aspetta,
e liberato m'ha de li altri giri.

Tanto è a Dio più cara e più diletta
la vedovella mia, che molto amai,
quanto in bene operare è più soletta;

ché la Barbagia di Sardigna assai
ne le femmine sue più è pudica
che la Barbagia dov'io la lasciai.

Nous voyons combien il est important pour les âmes de l'au-delà qu'un vivant se souvienne d'eux, puisque pour celles qui se trouvent au purgatoire c'est la seule façon d'avancer plus vite, donc de se purger et d'aller au paradis. D'autre part, dans le film d'animation nous voyons que seulement les âmes dont les vivants se souviennent d'elles à travers les *ofrendas* vivent en paix dans l'au-delà.

Conclusion

Nous pouvons constater qu'intentionnellement ou non, les réalisateurs du film d'animation *Coco*, Lee Unkrich et Adrian Molina, ont cité l'une des œuvres littéraires italiennes les plus célèbres au monde, la *Divine Comédie* de Dante Alighieri. En effet, dans notre analyse nous avons trouvé que les principaux personnages du film ont un lien avec certains personnages du poème : le héros Miguel comme nouveau Dante, Dante l'acolyte comme Dante *auctor*, Héctor toujours acolyte comme Virgile, Mamá Imelda comme Beatrice et l'ennemi Ernesto De La Cruz comme Brutus. Puis nous avons constaté comment certaines scènes sont le double des royaumes dantesques, notamment l'accès à l'au-delà, la représentation du purgatoire et du paradis terrestre, outre au fond de l'enfer. Nous avons conclu avec trois thématiques communes : la réprimande de Mamá Imelda à Miguel, comme celle de Beatrice à Dante, centrale dans la pellicule, mais secondaire dans le poème. En revanche, les deux autres thèmes sont plus approfondis : la connaissance toujours subordonnée au vouloir de Dieu et la mémoire, uniquement des ancêtres d'un côté et du souvenir des péchés, du souvenir du Dante *auctor* par rapport à ce qu'il a vu, *agens*, et le fait d'être rappelé des vivants. Ici, nous avons pris en considération la *Comédie* dantesque, mais ce serait intéressant d'analyser d'autre œuvres littéraires, par exemple le *Roman de la rose* de Guillaume de Lorris, pour la première partie, et de Jean de Meung, pour la seconde, afin de mettre en évidence comment notre culture littéraire influence la production culturelle d'aujourd'hui, comme celle cinématographique.

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L'esthétique de la synesthésie dans *Tous les matins du monde* de Pascal Quignard, roman et film

The Aesthetics of Synaesthesia in Pascal Quignard's *Tous les matins du monde*, Novel and Film

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Mots-clés

Quignard ; roman ; film; synesthésie ; littérature française ; XX^e siècle.

Le film *Tous les matins du monde*, récompensé à de nombreuses reprises et rencontrant un succès commercial, réalisé en 1991 en France, est le fruit d'une collaboration entre l'écrivain Pascal Quignard, le réalisateur Alain Corneau et le spécialiste international de la musique baroque, Jordi Savall. Quatre arts, la littérature, le cinéma, la musique et la peinture contribuent à la réalisation de l'esthétique de la synesthésie au roman et au film. Le scénario met en avant deux compositeurs et joueurs de viole français du XVII^e siècle. Monsieur de Sainte-Colombe plutôt anti-absolutiste, a refusé l'invitation de Louis XIV et son introduction à la cour royale. Son élève, Marin Marais, a fait sa carrière à la cour de Louis XIV. La tension entre leurs attitudes politiques marque aussi leur composition musicale. Le film permet l'exécution de pièces de musique baroque ainsi que la présentation des peintures de Lubin Baugin. Il y a également des réminiscences des œuvres de La Tour, Le Nain et d'autres peintres de la même époque. L'article traite les effets de l'esthétique de la synesthésie dans le roman et le film.

Keywords

Quignard; novel; film; synesthesia; French literature; 20th century.

The award-winning and commercially successful film *Tous les matins du monde* (All the mornings of the world), realized in France in 1991, is the outcome of a collaboration between the well-known novelist Pascal Quignard, the director Alain Corneau, and the musician and international baroque music specialist Jordi Savall. Four art forms, namely literature, cinema, music, and painting, contributed to the realization of the aesthetics of synesthesia in the novel and the film. The plot highlights two French composers and viola da gamba players from the 17th century. Monsieur de Sainte-Colombe, who held anti-absolutist views, declined the invitation from the king Louis XIV and refused to be introduced to the royal court. His pupil, Marin Marais, went on to build his career in the court of Louis XIV. The tension between their political attitudes also leaves its mark on their musical composition. The film allows for the performance of baroque music pieces and the presentation of paintings by Lubin Baugin. Additionally, there are reminiscences of works by La Tour, Le Nain, and other painters from the same period. The article explores the effects of the aesthetics of synesthesia in both the novel and the film.

Le roman et le film du même nom traitent de la vie de deux musiciens de l'Ancien Régime, qui ont vécu au XVII[e] siècle, Monsieur de Sainte Colombe et Marin Marais sous le règne de Louis XIV. L'intrigue se déroule à la fois au monde de la Cour et au monde de la campagne. Le personnage principal, Monsieur de Sainte Colombe, musicien, virtuose de basse de viole et compositeur, est un personnage historique qui appartenait probablement à la noblesse lyonnaise. Il semble que ce soit lui qui ait ajouté une septième corde à la basse de viole. Selon l'intrigue du roman, il vit, après la mort de sa femme, retiré du monde à la campagne, avec ses deux filles, une cuisinière et deux valets. Quand sa réputation parvient aux oreilles du roi, ce dernier l'invite au palais à deux reprises, proposition que M. de Sainte Colombe repousse avec colère. Marin Marais un jeune homme qui vient d'être rejeté du chœur de Saint-Germain-L'auxerrois après la mue de sa voix. Le jeune homme arrive, désespéré, dans ce coin retiré loin du monde où vivait M. de Sainte Colombe et il lui demande de l'accepter comme élève. Marin Marais est lui aussi un personnage historique qui étudia auprès de Sainte Colombe pendant un certain temps, et obtint par la suite une charge de « joueur de viole de la musique de la Chambre » auprès de Louis XIV. Il fit ensuite carrière à l'opéra auprès de Lully et a écrit plusieurs œuvres musicales.

Le *Parnasse françois* a retenu dans ses pages les relations de Sainte Colombe et de Marin Marais.

> Sainte Colombe fut même le Maitre de Marais ; mais s'étant aperçu au bout de six mois que son Elève pouvoit le surpasser, il lui dit qu'il n'avoit plus rien à lui montrer. Marais qui aimoit passionnément la Viole, voulut cependant profiter encore du scavoir de son maitre pour se perfectionner dans cet Instrument ; et comme il avoit quelque accès dans sa maison[1], il prenoit le tems en été que Sainte Colombe etoit dans son jardin enfermé dans un petit cabinet de planches, qu'il avoit pratiqué sur les branches d'un Murier, afin d'y jouer plus tranquillement et plus délicieusement de la Viole. Marais se glissoit sous ce cabinet ; il y entendoit son Maitre, et profitoit de quelques passages de quelques coups d'archet particuliers que les Maitres de l'Art aiment à se conserver ; mais cela ne dura pas long-tems, Sainte-Colombe s'en étant aperçu et s'étant mis sur ses gardes pour n'être plus entendu par son Elève. (Quignard, 1997 : 24-25)

Le transfert du roman au film présuppose la transposition d'un langage à un autre : de la narration textuelle à la narration cinématographique, qui comprend des signes verbaux (les mots, les discours) mais aussi des signes non verbaux (visuels, gestuel, mimique), et sonores (musique, bruit, les tons de l'énonciation des personnages). Tous les deux composent l'expérience esthétique filmique. La suite de l'article traitera de cette transposition d'un mode à l'autre, des enjeux sémantiques et esthétiques qui en découlent, des équivalences et des différences et finalement quel est le rôle de la synesthésie à la narration filmique.

1. De l'écrit à l'écran : les circonstances

Le film *Tous les matins du monde* est né de la coopération de trois créateurs : l'auteur Pascal Quignard, le réalisateur Alain Corneau et le violiste Jordi Savall. La première idée vient d'un essai que Pascal Quignard avait écrit sur la vie du musicien Marin Marais dans son recueil *La*

[1] C'est une allusion à la relation amoureuse de Marin Marais avec la fille aînée de M. de Ste Colombe, Madeleine de Ste Colombe, une relation nouée pendant les mois d'étude de Marin Marais auprès de M. de Ste Colombe.

leçon de musique. Le thème de la musique est un thème récurrent d'ailleurs dans les écrits de Pascal Quignard. Rappelons à titre d'exemple son livre *La haine de la musique*[2] et plusieurs essais dans le recueil *La vie Secrète,* où le thème de la musique et du silence refont surface[3]. C'est aussi dans le roman *Salon du Wurtemberg* que les effets intertextuels et inter-thématiques surgissent encore. Dans ce roman, le personnage principal est un musicien, un joueur de violoncelle et de viole de gambe, à l'instar de M. de Sainte Colombe et de Marin Marais, dont les personnages apparaissent aussi dans ce roman. Quant à la genèse de l'œuvre *Tous les matins du monde*, le réalisateur Alain Corneau s'adresse à Pascal Quignard et lui demande un scénario sur la musique à la Cour de Louis XIV. Selon Alain Corneau, Pascal Quignard a répondu à la première approche du réalisateur comme suit : « "Laissez Versailles, le Roi-Soleil, le pouvoir. Il faut monter des musiciens rebelles à la Cour". "Mais quels rebelles ?" demande Corneau. "Les protestants, les jansénistes de Port-Royal, et ceux qui n'ont pas de Christ chez-eux, qui vivent retirés dans leur province" » (Denis, 2010 : 46-47).

Montrer l'effet d'absolutisme sur la création artistique est un paramètre qui transperce le roman d'un bout à l'autre. La création filmique par conséquent, n'a pas suivi le chemin de l'adaptation d'un roman accompli. Au contraire, le réalisateur avait demandé un scénario à l'auteur, qui, lui, a préféré écrire un roman. Ce roman a constitué une base sur laquelle les deux hommes ont bâti le scénario après avoir élaboré dix-sept versions successives (Siciler, 2000). Le produit final, constitue plutôt les deux visages d'un même récit, romanesque et filmique. Or, le scenario est le fruit de la collaboration entre plusieurs créateurs. Pascal Quignard a assuré les dialogues, et ce sont en fait les parties qui présentent l'affiliation intertextuelle la plus fidèle à l'hypotexte, à savoir son roman. Jordi Savall, violoncelliste, violiste, directeur des ensembles musicaux, et spécialiste de rang international de la musique baroque qui devient le troisième pair de l'équipe, assure le choix des morceaux musicaux. De plus, il les adapte si besoin est et prend soin de conseiller les acteurs qui jouent les rôles des musiciens. Lui aussi, à l'instar du musicien Marin Marais, s'était lancé dans l'étude de la viole après avoir perdu sa voix d'enfant.

Le film du même nom a été tourné en 1991, année même de la publication du roman. Les rôles principaux sont tenus par Depardieu père et fils dans le rôle de Marin Marais, jeune et adulte, Jean-Pierre Marielle qui joue M. de Sainte Colombe et Anne Brochet qui joue le rôle de la fille ainée et musicienne Madeleine de Sainte Colombe. Le film fut un succès, tant commercial qu'artistique. Il a été couronné par le prix Louis Delluc 1991 et par 7 Césars, dont ceux du meilleur film et du meilleur réalisateur. Dans une seule année, il totalise plus de 700 000 entrées pour toute la France, un chiffre exceptionnel si l'on prend en considération le caractère intellectuel du film qui toutefois a pu toucher le large public. Même la bande-son du film est parvenue, grâce à ses ventes élevées, à figurer dans le « Top 30 » de RTL-Virgin, un dispositif qui concerne les disques de la musique dite « moderne » et non classique (Lompech, 1992a). De même, ce coup de foudre pour la musique baroque suscité par la réussite du film, a donné un nouveau souffle aux ventes des anciens disques du gambiste Jordi Savall (Lompech, 1992b).

[2] Sur la fonction de la musique dans les œuvres *La haine de la musique* et la *Leçon de musique* de Pascal Quignard, voir l'étude de Coste, 2005.

[3] Sur la musique dans l'œuvre de Pascal Quignard, voir l'étude de Jean-Louis Pautrot (2004 : 55-76), dans lequel la fonction de la musique dans l'œuvre de Pascal Quignard est étudiée selon trois axes : psychologique, anthropologique et enfin interaction dans l'œuvre de l'écrivain de deux esthétiques : musicale et littéraire.

> Le processus du texte au film nécessite une transformation des signes. Tout d'abord intervient le passage du signe linguistique présent dans le texte écrit au signe iconique qui prévaut dans la réalisation filmique, comportant deux étapes : celle de la représentation iconique du récit et deuxièmement, l'intégration dans l'action des tableaux, un choix délibéré qui renvoie à l'esthétique picturale, qui est elle aussi une des piliers de l'adaptation. De plus y sont incorporés des morceaux musicaux, élément majeur de la réalisation, puisque les deux personnages principaux, Monsieur de Ste Colombe et Marin Marais, sont des musiciens importants du XVII[e] siècle et de la musique dite baroque. En fait, le film réalise la convergence de quatre arts : littérature, cinéma, musique et peinture. L'effet de leur conjonction est la synesthésie, objectif principal des créateurs. Le concept de synesthésie consiste en une expérience esthétique qui résulte de la sensibilisation du destinataire par plusieurs approches esthétiques à la fois. Cette opération de synthèse et de dialogue de plusieurs arts dans une œuvre est conçue pour la première fois par Baudelaire[4]. Dans le film en question, cette sensibilisation est effectuée par l'exploitation et la convergence du littéraire, du pictural et du musical. Il paraît que le film sert aussi de véhicule pour faire connaître la musique baroque au grand public. Les engagements d'ailleurs de Pascal Quignard dans les institutions culturelles liées à la musique baroque ainsi que auprès du Président François Mitterrand constituent des évidences vers ce sens. (Denis, 2010 : 18-19)

2. Du roman au film

2.1. Les procédés narratifs

Le roman est composé de trois types d'énoncés : énoncés narratifs, énoncés descriptifs et dialogues. Du roman au scénario, trois types de modifications ont lieu. Tout au long de la transposition cinématographique ont lieu d'abord des *transformations quantitatives* (Genette, 1982 : 321-395). Il y a en premier lieu des *réductions*, opération qui consiste à abréger le texte initial. Dans la plupart des cas, cette réduction se fait par l'opération de la *concision* qui « se donne pour règle d'abréger un texte sans en supprimer aucune partie thématiquement significative » (332). Quelques parties peuvent être racontées de façon succincte puisqu'elles sont épaulées par l'image[5]. Quelques passages cependant ont totalement disparu[6]. C'est l'opération de l'*excision* qui consiste « en une suppression pure et simple » (323). Un grand nombre d'énoncés descriptifs ont ainsi disparu, remplacés par l'image narrative cinématographique[7]. Et puis, il y a aussi des *augmentations,* l'opération « qui consiste à étendre le texte initial » (321), par exemple la scène où Marin Marais voit Madeleine qui s'apprêtait à se baigner dans la rivière. Un passage court dans le livre qui est développé longuement dans le film à partir de la 46[e] minute. Quelques passages sont ajoutés, comme la séquence initiale qui traite de la vie de Marin Marais à Versailles à la fin de sa vie, de façon défavorable pour lui ; il est présenté vieilli et usé. C'est lui qui entame le récit de la vie de Ste Colombe et effectue le changement de point de vue de la narration.

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[4] Baudelaire développe ce concept dans les « Correspondances » qui fait partie de son recueil *Les fleurs du mal*. Le concept et les références sont cités dans Sébastien Denis (2010 : 10).

[5] Comme l'énoncé dialogique entre M. de Ste Colombe, Marin Marais et Madeleine de Ste Colombe développé dans les pages 74-75.

[6] Par exemple, l'énoncé narratif des pages 56-57 qui raconte les préparatifs de M. de Ste Colombe pour le voyage à Paris afin de récupérer le tableau qu'il avait commandé à son ami le peintre Lubin Baugin.

[7] À titre d'exemple, les énoncés narratifs des pages 83, 86, 101.

2.2. Le changement de point de vue

La vision qui est reprise au roman est celle de la focalisation zéro. Il y a un narrateur, omniprésent et omniscient, qui raconte l'histoire. Dans le film, la même vision est conservée, mais la place du narrateur est tenue cette fois par l'un des personnages du roman : c'est Marin Marais, qui assume donc le rôle du narrateur autodiégétique, à savoir celui qui est en même temps un personnage principal de l'action. Pourquoi l'auteur a-t-il entrepris cette modification ? Il était impossible ou très fatiguant pour l'action de maintenir un narrateur dans un film, qui nécessite l'implication des personnages dans l'action. Mais il aurait pu garder cette trouvaille pour le roman. Le fait qu'il ait choisi un narrateur extradiégétique pour le roman démontre qu'il a trouvé cette pratique plus convenable et plus propice à l'écriture.

Cependant ce changement de focalisation a apporté une modification sémantique de l'ensemble. Tandis que les deux créations racontent *grosso modo* la même histoire, le roman porte plutôt sur la vie de Sainte Colombe, vue à travers le narrateur extradiégétique, tandis que dans le film, l'option d'un narrateur autodiégétique entraîne une modification sémantique : le film porte plutôt sur la vie de Marin Marais qui est mise au premier plan. Aussi cette vision alterne-t-elle avec celle de focalisation interne dans le film, puisque le narrateur autodiégétique à partir d'un certain moment, abandonne son rôle pour participer à l'action, et utilise alors le « je ». Cependant ainsi que Sébastien Denis l'observe, « le retour au présent de la narration par Marais allonge un roman très court – il a aussi pour avantage de montrer quand même la Cour, ce qu'avait refusé Quignard. » (Denis, 2010 : 56).

2.3. M. de Ste Colombe et Louis XIV

Le déroulement de l'intrigue réserve deux scènes du renvoi des délégués du roi. Quand la réputation de la compétence de M. de Ste Colombe arrive aux oreilles du roi, ce dernier envoie Monsieur Caignet, joueur de viole attitré du roi, pour inviter M. de Ste Colombe à la Cour. M. de Ste Colombe écoute la proposition du roi, mais il refuse. Dans le roman, la scène du renvoi du représentant du roi est décrite comme relativement calme : « Monsieur de St Colombe poussait Monsieur Caignet vers la maison tout en parlant. Il se saluèrent » (Quignard, 1991 : 26).

En revanche, son équivalent dans le film est présenté de façon plus agressive. Monsieur de Ste Colombe pousse brutalement M. Caignet hors de sa cabane et ils ne se saluent pas. De même pour la scène suivante, quand M. Caignet accompagné cette fois de l'abbé Mathieu, renouvelle l'invitation du roi. Dans le roman, la réaction de M. de Ste Colombe est vive, mais dans le film, elle semble beaucoup plus brutale, un effet qui est obtenu par le ton furieux de la voix de M. de Ste Colombe, ainsi que par le bruit de la chaise qu'il casse pour mieux exprimer sa colère et son refus définitif aux représentants du roi.

Trop peu de gens ont refusé l'accès à la Cour de Louis XVI. Au contraire, être le plus près possible au roi était considéré à l'époque comme une faveur inestimable. Le refus de M. de Ste Colombe revêt un aspect nettement politique. Le texte laisse entendre que M. de Ste Colombe appartenait au jansénisme, un courant religieux et politique organisé autour de Port-Royal, qui s'opposait au catholicisme et à l'absolutisme[8]. De même, son choix de vivre sobrement à la campagne est un mode de vie qui rejette le modèle envié de la vie somptueuse à la Cour. Après la curialisation de la noblesse, la vie à la campagne exprimait sa nostalgie pour son état antérieur

[8] Pour les liens entre le jansénisme et la Fronde, au moins au niveau idéologique, leur penchant pour l'idéologie démocratique (comme elle était conçue à l'époque) et enfin le conflit avec le roi Louis XIV, voir *Jansénisme et politique* (Taveneaux, 1965 : 5-41).

à l'absolutisme, son passé glorieux (Norbert, 1985). Cette nostalgie pour le pays natal et la nature, s'exprime par exemple dans la poésie de Joachim du Bellay ou de Desportes, ainsi que dans la peinture de Poussin à Watteau où s'impose la prédilection pour les thèmes sur la nature champêtre.

Ce caractère anti-absolutiste du personnage se construit non seulement sur son refus d'appartenir à la Cour, mais aussi sur la recherche de son art. Quand le jeune Marin Marais supplie M. de Ste Colombe de l'accepter comme élève, le compositeur après l'avoir écouté jouer, lui répond :

> Vous pourrez aider à danser les gens qui dansent. Vous pourrez accompagner les acteurs qui chantent sur la scène. Vous gagnerez votre vie. Vous vivrez entouré de musique, mais vous ne serez pas musicien.
> Avez-vous un cœur pour sentir ? Avez-vous un cerveau pour penser ? Avez-vous idée de ce à quoi peuvent servir les sons quand il ne s'agit plus de danser ni de réjouir les oreilles du roi ? (Quignard, 1991 : 53-54)

La position anti-absolutiste de St Colombe s'étend également au domaine des arts. Composer ou jouer dans le seul but de plaire à la Cour vient en opposition avec les éléments qui constituent le noyau sacré de l'art selon la conception de St. Colombe. Le personnage de St Colombe est marqué par l'anti-absolutisme ainsi que Sébastien Denis fait l'analyse (2010 : 63 et suite). Il pense toutefois que les traits du personnage sont exagérés, hyperboliques, sans être toujours en rapport avec la personne réelle. De plus, non seulement le texte et le film soulignent une position clairement anti-absolutiste et antiroyaliste, mais d'autres écrits de Pascal Quignard épousent ce point de vue. La même position idéologique régit l'intrigue de ses romans *Le nom au bout de la langue* et *Terrasse à Rome.*

Le caractère plutôt brutal de M. de Ste Colombe est développé dans le film non seulement aux scènes de revoie des déléguées du roi. À titre d'exemple, une scène interpolée dans le film présente sa fille cadette Toinette, venant dans la maison et apportant dans sa main une coccinelle, qu'elle pose sur la table. M. de Ste Colombe l'écrase de son doigt, sans dire un mot.

3. L'esthétique de la synesthésie dans le roman et le film

Du roman au film, au langage discursif de l'écriture s'ajoute chaque fois le langage iconique de l'image cinématographique. Toutefois cette adaptation est amplifiée de deux autres langages artistiques : la musique et la peinture.

3.1. Les effets de la musique

Seize morceaux de musique[9] sont écoutés ou joués dans le film. Dans la plupart sont composés par les deux musiciens qui constituent des personnages du film : M. de Ste Colombe et Marin Marais. Dans cette étude nous ne retiendrons que ceux qui sont mentionnés dans le roman pour envisager les effets cumulés de la transposition filmique. Tout au long du film, la musique baroque occupe une place prépondérante. Il n'est pas sans intérêt de relever que l'écrivain a fondé avec Jordi Savall une association de bienfaiteurs ayant pour but la promotion de la musique baroque à travers le film. Les passages musicaux sont nombreux et ne constituent point un simple « canevas » pour accompagner l'action. Au contraire, ils constituent des parties organiques de l'action du film, qui servent à créer l'ambiance nécessaire pour ressentir l'émotion esthétique. Plusieurs procédés sont employés, notamment l'interruption du

[9] Voir l'appendice à la fin de l'article.

discours, comme illustré dans les scènes où Madame de Sainte Colombe apparaît à son mari. Ces scènes sont principalement silencieuses, pendant que Monsieur de Sainte Colombe joue de sa basse de viole comme à son habitude. Une scène de ce type commence à la 31e minute du film. L'apparition du fantôme et la musique baroque qui domine ces scènes, accentuent la parenté présumée entre le transcendant et l'essence de la musique recherchée par Monsieur de Sainte Colombe. Au sujet du fantôme, du Revenant, Pascal Quignard note dans la *Leçon de musique* : « Au sein du temps humain, la musique est un Revenant du temps » (1987 : 65). Cette liaison de la musique avec le monde d'au-delà refait surface dans une autre œuvre de cet auteur, dans ses *Abîmes,* où le mythe d'Orphée est revisité :

> Orphée fils d'Oegre était chanteur. Il ajouta deux cordes à la lyre. Sa femme mourut sur une rive couverte d'arbres**.** Il passa deux roches. Il descendit aux enfers pour l'y chercher. Elle s'appelait Eurydice.
> Il chanta.
> Entendant son chant, Hadès et Perséphone se mirent à pleurer. En larmes, ils consentirent au retour de son épouse sur terre. […] (2002b : 189).

Les liens intertextuels qui lient ce passage au roman et au film sont flagrants. Sainte Colombe avait ajouté une septième corde à la basse de viole. La famille vivait près d'une rivière et sa femme était morte. Ici le mythe d'Orphée est réécrit d'après les éléments de la vie de Sainte Colombe. S'agit-il bien d'une affinité établie délibérément ou d'une allusion spontanée ?

Le thème de l'affinité entre Revenance, ou le monde de l'au-delà, et la musique refait surface dans un autre ouvrage de Pascal Quignard, les *Ombres errantes,* où l'auteur observe : « Pluton est le dieu de l'autre monde. Il est *Celui qui voit dans l'ombre.* Shakespeare a écrit : Pluton ferme les yeux tandis que joue Orphée » (2002 : 65).

Pascal Quignard note dans le même ouvrage que « Walter Benjamin a écrit au début du siècle dernier que les inventions de la photographie et de la cinématographie avaient introduit, à l'intérieur même de ce qu'elles avaient mis au jour, l'absence d'ombre » (2002 : 64).

Un autre élément de la musique est celui de la cabane que M. de Ste Colombe avait bâtie dans la cour, loin de sa maison, et qu'il utilisait pour s'exercer. Cette cabane en bois était construite de façon inhabituelle : elle était surélevée du sol, et appuyée sur de courts morceaux de troncs d'arbres. Dans *La leçon de musique,* la cabane de M. de Ste Colombe s'apparente au plancher résonateur des nôs (Quignard, 1987 : 25)[10]. Il semble que la cabane ait été construite non seulement pour permettre à Sainte Colombe de s'isoler, mais aussi pour faire mieux ressortir la résonance des sons ; il s'agit probablement d'une cabane expérimentale. Le thème de la cabane refait surface inopinément dans une autre œuvre de P. Quignard, *Zetès*. Dans cette œuvre, la traduction est apparentée à la cabane de Sainte Colombe : « Toute traduction est une cabane de Sainte Colombe, établie dans un mûrier, qui ne touche plus le sol » (2010 : 149). La cabane est transposée cinématographiquement aussi, cela va de soi, et elle constitue un des

[10] Cette allusion un peu obscure sur les sonorités du théâtre japonais qui suivent un rituel précis, pourrait le cas échéant se référer aux sons très rudimentaires des instruments traditionnels en bois que les musiciens battent d'une technique concrète. Ce mélange des sons pas très élaborés selon notre sens de musique occidentale, mais très purs, crée une ambiance d'un monde d'au-delà, ce que Quignard justement pense de la fonction de la musique. C'est « La nostalgie du perdu » pour reprendre le titre de l'article de Nadine Sautel (2009).

éléments scéniques majeurs de l'action. Plusieurs scènes, même la dernière de la rencontre finale des deux musiciens, y ont lieu.

Hormis les nombreux morceaux musicaux joués et entendus dans le film, pour les raisons que nous avons déjà explicitées, il y en a deux qui sont mentionnés dans le roman. Leur présence est organiquement liée au déroulement de l'action.

La Rêveuse est un morceau original composé par Marin Marais. Il fait son apparition vers la fin de l'intrigue, lorsque Madeleine, la fille de St Colombe tombe gravement malade. Marin Marais convoqué de Versailles, vient lui rendre visite. Il est cependant froid et distant devant Madeleine, apparemment affaiblie et amaigrie. Elle lui demande de jouer *La Rêveuse*, le morceau qu'il avait jadis composé pour elle aux temps de leur amour. Dans le texte, cette séquence est réalisée par un court énoncé narratif suivi d'un énoncé descriptif tout aussi court : « Il commença d'interpréter la *Rêveuse* et elle l'interrompit en lui enjoignant d'être plus lent. Il reprit. Elle le regardait jouer avec des yeux qui brûlaient de fièvre. Elle ne les fermait pas. Elle détaillait son corps en train de jouer » (1991 : 104).

Dans ce court passage, l'accent est mis sur le personnage de Madeleine et de sa condition. L'effet de la musique n'est suggéré que par quelques syntagmes : *Il commence d'interpréter la Rêveuse, il reprit, elle le regardait jouer*. L'esthétique musicale est évidement absente. En revanche, dans le film toute cette scène est régie par l'exécution de la *Rêveuse*, qui devient l'effet esthétique dominant, même des scènes du chapitre suivant, (le vingt-cinq), où sont racontés le départ de Marin Marais et le suicide de Madeleine. Dans la transposition cinématographique, ces séquences se déroulent sous la musique de la *Rêveuse*, permettant ainsi au destinataire de jouir d'une expérience esthétique musicale de ce morceau caractéristique de la musique baroque, sans pour autant que cette intrusion interrompe le déroulement de l'intrigue assuré par l'image filmique. Il est évident aussi que cette fusion de ces deux esthétiques ne peut se faire que dans les conditions cinématographiques.

La mort prématurée de sa femme a inspiré à M. de Ste Colombe l'œuvre *Le tombeau de Regrets*, dont la première mention dans le roman est très succincte. Il refait toutefois surface dans le chapitre VI. Un énoncé narratif relativement court informe le lecteur qu'une nuit M. de Ste Colombe se dirigea vers sa cabane où il exerçait son art et interprétait de nouvelles compositions et essayait de nouvelles positions de l'archet. Il avait emporté une carafe de vin « garnie de paille » (36), un verre à vin à pied et un plat d'étain « contenant quelques gaufrettes » (36). Il commença à jouer le *Tombeau de regrets* sans avoir besoin de se reporter à sa partition, tant il savait par cœur la composition. Le narrateur extradiégétique raconte la scène où sa femme défunte apparaît pendant l'exécution du *Tombeau :* elle s'assied sur le coffre de musique pour l'écouter. M. de Ste Colombe continue de jouer tandis que ses larmes coulent de ses yeux. Une fois sa femme disparue, il s'aperçoit qu'une des gaufrettes a été à demi grignotée, détail qui fonctionne comme signe de la vérité de l'apparition du fantôme-femme. Cette séquence est racontée dans le sixième chapitre du livre et elle se déroule à partir de la trentième minute du film.

Dans le film, la scène est transposée à la lettre. Cependant l'émotion de la réception est renforcée par la vue des acteurs qui interprètent la séquence : la jeunesse et la beauté de la femme défunte incarnée par Caroline Sihol soulignent le tragique de sa disparation prématurée ; les larmes qui jaillissent des yeux de M. de Ste Colombe et coulent sur ses joues, tandis qu'il continue à jouer *Les Pleurs* lors de toute la scène cinématographique. Il faut aussi ajouter que *Le Tombeau de Regrets,* une composition originale de M. de Ste Colombe, comporte plusieurs volets, dont la partie intitulée *Les Pleurs*. Ce morceau a été composé pour deux violes.

Pour servir l'intrigue du film, Jordi Savall l'a adapté afin qu'il fût exécuté par une seule viole. Sa version originale à deux violes est cependant jouée au dénouement du film, quand Marin Marais et M. de Ste Colombe l'exécutent ensemble.

Les éléments scénographiques de ce cette scène (la table avec la nappe bleue, la carafe, le verre à demi rempli de vin, le plateau rempli de gaufrettes) vont constituer le contenu de la scène qui suit.

3.2. Les effets de la peinture

Dans le roman sont mentionnés deux tableaux de Lubin Baugin, et la peinture de Champaigne, qui sans être louée, fonctionne en tant que signe à l'inverse. Elle indique ce que M. de Ste Colombe n'appréciait pas (1991 : 17). En revanche, le film est profondément pictural. Les choix des costumes et des objets ainsi que la conception scénographique sont vivement imprégnés par l'art de l'époque, ainsi que le confirme Alain Corneau lui-même à la conversation avec Jordi Savall : « En fait la peinture était notre principal guide de mise en scène... » (2010). Cette conversation sous forme d'interview entre les deux collaborateurs majeurs du film, parue sur le site *Classica* et reproduite sur le site de *l'Express* éclaire plusieurs points sur leurs intentions et leurs choix.

On pourrait facilement trouver les traces de tableaux tels que le *Philosophe en méditation* et *Le syndic de la guilde des drapiers* de Rembrandt, le *Triptyque Agliardi* d'Evaristo Baschenis, le *Portrait de Saint-Cyran,* et *Le Maistre de Sacy* de Philippe de Champaigne, entre autres dans la mise en scene du film[11]. Cependant, dans cette brève étude, nous focaliserons notre attention sur deux tableaux qui appartiennent aux éléments constitutifs de l'action.

Lubin Baugin est un peintre né vers 1610 à Pithiviers, peu connu aujourd'hui et encore peu étudié. Il appartient lui aussi à la petite noblesse, comme M. de Ste Colombe, et il a étudié la peinture à Fontainebleau. Il arrive à Paris vers 1627-8 où il exerce son art à Saint-Germain-des-Prés, avant de partir pour Italie, où il se marie et a deux enfants. Le film présente deux de ses natures mortes. Le choix de ce peintre constitue un anachronisme. Il a vécu en effet sous le règne de Louis XIII, il n'était donc pas contemporain des personnages du roman. En tant que personnage prend toutefois part à l'intrigue et il est présenté comme un ami de M. de Ste Colombe. Selon l'intrigue, c'est à ce peintre qui vit à Paris que M. de Ste Colombe a commandé ce tableau comme souvenir de l'apparition de sa femme : « Il prit un crayon et il demanda à un ami appartenant à la corporation des peintres, Monsieur Baugin, qu'il fît un sujet qui représentât la table à écrire près de laquelle sa femme était apparue » (1991 : 38).

Cette table, selon l'énoncé descriptif du roman, était couverte d'une nappe bleue, avec une carafe de vin « garnie de paille », un verre à vin à pied et un plat d'étain « contenant quelques gaufrettes », qui constituent les objets du tableau *Le dessert des gaufrettes*[12] de Lubin Baugin.

[11] Sur le site suivant, on peut trouver une intéressante étude photographique sur les équivalences possibles entre les différents tableaux contemporains du déroulement de l'intrigue et les scènes du film éventuellement inspirées par eux : http://www.lettresvolees.fr/quignard/peinture.html [consulté le 15 février 2024].

[12] Lubin Baugin, Le Dessert de gaufrettes (vers 1630-1635), huile sur panneau, 41 x 52 cm, Paris, avec un commentaire concis, disponible sur le site de musée du Louvre : https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010065541 [consulté le 15 février 2024].

Le tableau est présenté dans le film, s'ajoutant ainsi directement comme un quatrième élément esthétique, celui de la peinture. Ce peintre, bien que méconnu, est placé au cœur de l'intrigue, et son style esthétique vient compléter ceux des autres arts représentés. Son deuxième tableau, de même présenté dans l'action, montre de façon encore plus claire pourquoi ce peintre a été choisi, et combien son esthétique est compatible avec les objectifs idéologiques et esthétiques du roman et du film.

Le deuxième tableau évoqué dans le roman, de Lubin Baugin également, est intitulé *Nature morte à l'échiquier*[13]. Le lecteur en est informé par un énoncé descriptif :

> Ils se retrouvèrent près du poêle dans l'atelier de Monsieur Baugin. Le peintre était occupé à peindre une table : un verre à moitié plein de vin rouge, un luth couché, un cahier de musique, une bourse de velours noir, des cartes à jouer dont la première était un valet de trèfle, un échiquier sur lequel étaient disposés un vase avec trois œillets et un miroir octogonal appuyé contre le mur de l'atelier. « Tout ce que la mort ôtera est dans sa nuit », souffla Sainte-Colombe dans l'oreille de son élève. « Ce sont tous les plaisirs du monde qui se retirent en nous disant adieu. ». (1991 : 59-60)

La plus grande partie de l'énoncé descriptif est formée d'une parataxe des éléments qui composent le tableau. Mais comme si la perception que la description permettait n'était pas assez solide, les deux phrases de M. de Ste Colombe viennent expliciter les secrets du tableau. L'énoncé dialogique est jugé nécessaire pour développer la conception que le tableau véhicule. En vérité, il s'agit d'un faux dialogue puisque les phrases de Ste Colombe n'appellent pas de réponses ou de commentaires de la part de Marin Marais. En somme, l'entrelacement de l'énoncé descriptif et de l'énoncé dialogique permet d'analyse le tableau sur deux axes, l'un permettant l'exploration de la surface, l'autre qui s'enfonce dans son contenu sémantique.

Ce tableau est une *vanité*, un genre de peinture pratiqué surtout à l'époque baroque, qui consiste en une « représentation picturale évoquant la précarité de la vie et l'inanité des occupations humaines ». Le mouvement baroque dans la littérature et les arts est en effet régi d'une telle vision de la vie, suite probablement des effets funestes des guerres de religion, et des famines et des épidémies qu'elles ont entraînées. L'optimisme de la Renaissance était rapidement balayé par la cruauté de la guerre et de ses corolaires, et cette réalité funeste a finalement imprégné, comme il était normal, l'expression artistique et littéraire (Souiller, 1988 : 107-113 et 127-181).

Dans cette nature morte sont combinés divers éléments, qui renvoient à différents aspects de la vie. Le luth, le jeu de cartes, l'échiquier, renvoient tous aux loisirs ; la bourse et la perle évoquent la force de l'argent, la puissance, liées aussi à la sensualité ; le vin, le pain et les œillets constituent une allusion à l'Eucharistie, à l'élément divin.

Tous ces éléments sont disposés en telle sorte qu'ils se reflètent dans un miroir suspendu au mur, à droite. Le miroir et le reflet suscitent une réflexion sur l'effet réel dans le monde, sur ce qui est vrai. Le miroir ne reflète pas les objets, il est cependant présent dans le tableau, fonctionnant en tant que symbole. Le reflet dans le miroir montre les apparences. Sur ce tableau se déroule une dialectique entre le vrai et l'apparence, le superficiel et l'essentiel, le stable et le fugitif. La vie, vue sous cet angle, s'étale sur ses deux dimensions : d'une part le temporaire qui est évoqué par les plaisirs de la vie, courte et limitée dans le temps et l'espace : d'autre part l'allusion au divin met l'accent sur son intemporalité, son caractère illimité et stable ; il renvoie finalement à l'essence par opposition à l'apparence.

Cette nature morte redouble la conception du roman et du film. Elle comporte la confrontation de deux mondes, du mondain qui renvoie à la Cour, à ses loisirs, sa volupté, sa

[13] *Nature morte à l'échiquier*, dite aussi *Les cinq sens*, Lubin Baugin (vers 1610-1663), huile sur bois, 55 x 73 cm, Paris, musée du Louvre. L'interprétation du tableau par le musée du Louvre est disponible sur le lien suivant: https://www.louvre.fr/louvreplus/video-nature-morte-a-l-echiquier-lubin-baugin [consulté le 15 février 2024].

puissance, aux sensations temporaires et passagères, que M. de Ste Colombe refuse pour se consacrer au perfectionnement de son art, lié pour lui à l'essence divine, au monde de l'au-delà, à l'éternité. Sur ce point nous pourrions évoquer la philosophie de Platon et le monde des idées, des apparences de ce monde, et le monde dans lequel nous vivons. Le mythe de la caverne[14] exprime justement ce croisement des regards sur le monde ordinaire dans lequel nous vivons, conçu par le philosophe comme un monde régi par l'illusoire, et le vrai monde, le monde éternel, que peu de gens peuvent percevoir. Quoique rien dans le texte ne renvoie explicitement à la philosophie de Platon, l'affiliation de la conception entre le monde des apparences et le monde intemporel des idées est évidente.

Pour conclure, l'adjonction de ces deux langages, celui de la musique et celui de la peinture, en tant qu'éléments constitutifs du film, crée une expérience esthétique plus accomplie comparativement à celle du livre. Cela nous permet de parler d'un produit esthétique distinct de sa matrice littéraire, qui l'enrichit et qui est apte à susciter une expérience esthétique différente, malgré bien entendu le grand nombre d'affinités qui relient les deux œuvres. Le film rassemble dans une seule œuvre la parole, la musique, la peinture et l'image cinématographique, et forme un objet esthétique original. Le film parvient à faire appel à plusieurs sens, et à plusieurs esthétiques, et parvient finalement à son but : composer un objet d'art par plusieurs approches esthétiques, en permettant le dialogue entre elles. De la sorte, les différents arts contribuent à véhiculer les idées qui composent le noyau idéologique, tout en évoquant plusieurs sens, ce qui permet une meilleure conception des idées, et la sensibilisation aux différentes esthétiques. Il parvient ainsi à composer cet objet de synesthésie prônée par Baudelaire.

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Appendice : Compositions musicales du film

1. Marche pour la cérémonie des Turcs (Jean-Baptiste Lully)
2. Improvisations sur les folies d'Espagne (extraits) (Marin Marais)
3. Prélude pour Mr. Vaquelin (Improvisation d'après le Prélude en Sol mineur de M. de Sainte Colombe le fils)
4. Gavotte du Tendre (M. de Sainte Colombe)
5. Une jeune fillette (Mélodie populaire – Arrangement Jordi Savall)
6. Les Pleurs (M. de Sainte Colombe, version viole seule de Jordi Savall)
7. Concert à deux violes « La Retour » (M. de Sainte Colombe)
8. La Rêveuse – 4eme livre de Pièces de viole (Marin Marais)
9. Troisième Leçon de Ténèbres à 2 voix (François Couperin)
10. L'Arabesque – 4eme livre de Pièces de viole (Marin Marais)
11. Fantaisie en Mi mineur (Arrangement Jordi Savall d'après M. de Sainte Colombe le fils)
12. Les Pleurs (version à 2 violes) (M. de Sainte Colombe)
13. Le Badinage – 4eme livre de Pièces de viole (Marin Marais)
14. Tombeau pour M. de Sainte Colombe – 2eme livre de Pièces de viole (Marin Marais)

15. Muzettes I-II – 3eme livre de Pièces de viole (Marin Marais)
16. Sonnerie de Ste Geneviève du Mont-de-Paris (Marin Marais)

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Hospice Words. Text Mining and Visualizations in Ken Kesey's Cuckoo's Nest and Hauben & Goldman's Movie Script

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Keywords

Voyant Tools; Digital Humanity; Text Mining; Novel Visualization; Ken Kesey; Miloš Forman; *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest.*

Miloš Forman's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* film adaptation released in 1975 captures the essence of Ken Kesey's novel, additionally making some remarkable "European" differences to match the medium of the long picture format. The movie adaptation was made during a time of significant social and cultural change in the United States and finally put in front of the public something that nobody dared to touch in the industry. From a digital perspective, not many Romanian scientific articles have cobbled together and used data mining tools for textual analysis of distributions, recurrences, and term stylometry criteria to highlight information about the characters, attributes, the fundamental or secondary themes of a literary work. With this aim, and with the help of data synthesis and visual representations offered by Voyant Tools, we tried to quantitatively mark how, both in the book and in the film script, the quickly extracted data can comparatively highlight the main protagonists, themes, correlations and other attributes of the novel and the script. For the corpus analysis, we used the movie script available on *DailyScript*, and the 50th Anniversary Edition of the book, printed by Viking, Penguin Group, in 2012.

[…] *Forman's films exist as prayers to the wild at heart kept in cages and odes to flames that burn brightly, but are extinguished with brutality.* (Variety)

Conformity and Individualism in One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

In 1962, Ken Kesey authored *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, a literary masterpiece that delves deeply into the complexities of human behavior, societal norms, and the conflict between individualism and conformity, as well as oppression. This novel explores the tension between societal norms and individual desires for private freedom and expression. At the same time, the book offers a searing critique of the mental health institution (which was the American society of the post-Vietnam War), as a microcosm of larger societal structures and limns a vivid and often disturbing portrayal of life within the walls of mental institutions.

Ken Kesey's novel takes place in a mental institution, a miniature society in which characters with diverse backgrounds, different stories, and mental conditions have surprising interactions. Randle P. McMurphy, a rebellious figure, fakes insanity to evade prison labor and is admitted to the institution. His arrival disrupted the strength dynamics controlled by the main nurse Ratched.

Often known as 'Big Nurse', the chief of the medical staff symbolizes conformity and authoritarian leadership, using mental manipulation and physical punishment to maintain order among patients. With its particular quirks and flawed stories, each patient mirrors different aspects of societal conformity and individualism in the United States (Swaine, 2011). Chief Bromden, a Native American patient, and the story narrator, is a vital character who initially pretends to be deaf and dumb but ultimately regains his voice and self-identity through McMurphy's influence. Other patients, such as Billy Bibbit and Cheswick, represent vulnerable spirits suppressed by different societal pressures.

Fig. 1 – Voyant Cirrus Cloud: top raw terms in the book. Hovering over the word reveals the raw frequency count of that word

The significant conflict in the novel revolves around the power struggle between McMurphy and Nurse Ratched. The 'Big Nurse' represents institutionalized conformity and control (a 'Big Brother' allusion, maybe) and uses her authority to suppress individualism and keep a facade of order. McMurphy, however, embodies rebellion and freedom, challenging the institution's rules and encouraging fellow patients to express themselves.

The psychiatric institutions in the novel reflect broader public perceptions of mental illness in the mid-20th century. Historically, mental health institutions have been plagued by neglect, abuse, and lack of understanding of mental health (Christensen, 2010: 72-74). These institutions became symbols of isolation where individuals were stigmatized and subjected to inhumane conditions. Kesey's work emerged at a time of widespread awareness of mental health reform, helping shape an important new approach to these institutions. Mental institutions have come to be a micro-society wherein the battle among these forces is amplified. McMurphy's rebellious spirit and charismatic nature awaken patients' suppressed goals of self-expression and autonomy. Bromden's adventure, from feeling small and invisible to regaining his identity, illustrates the transformative power of embracing individualism.

The institution's dehumanizing practices are evident in its use of electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) and lobotomy as methods of control. These procedures are administered without genuine concern for patients' well-being, emphasizing the institution's desire to comply with their mental health. The lobotomy performed on McMurphy symbolizes the ultimate form of control – the destruction of his autonomy and individuality. Patients' experiences of dehumanization, such as being treated as objects or numbers, resonate with broader concerns regarding the erosion of human dignity in institutional settings. Kesey's portrayal challenges society's tendency to devalue individuals who do not conform to the *de facto* norms.

Ken Kesey faced criticism from various sources during his career, especially in response to his book *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. The story dealt with topics related to mental health, social norms, and rebellion, which elicited mixed reactions from critics.

Leslie Fiedler, a prominent critic of Kesey's work, was the literary scholar who offered a consistent critique of the book for what she perceived as a depiction of oppressive female authority. (Fiedler, 2008: 21).

Kesey also faced objections about his representations of female characters in the novel from various critics (Jansson, 2015, 10; Machalová, 2020: 60; Scerri, 2020: 65-66). Nurse Ratched is presented unfavorably, and her interactions with male patients are characterized by power struggles and manipulation. Some argue that this portrayal reinforces negative stereotypes associated with women in positions of authority. Furthermore, female characters in the novel generally possess less depth than their male counterparts, leading to criticism that this perpetuates gender stereotypes (Calle, 2014: 45-46). Criticism of Kesey's treatment of gender in the novel has sparked conversations about the broader implications of the book's themes and characters, as well as the ways in which literature both reflects and influences cultural perspectives on gender and power (VanWert, 1976: 51-52).

An extremely difficult adaptation

The cinematic rendition of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, helmed by Miloš Forman, materialized amidst a period characterized by substantial social and cultural transformations within the United States. The film was released in 1975, and its production process likely reflected the prevailing climate of the era. The 1960's and the 1970's were marked by various social and cultural movements, including the Anti-Vietnam War Movement, the Civil Rights Movement, and Women's Liberation Movement. These social and political movements have challenged traditional norms and structures, including those related to power dynamics and authority. The countercultural movement of the 1960's still influenced society in the 1970's. This movement promoted anti-establishment sentiments, individual freedom, and challenging traditional authority, which resonated with the themes of rebellion in the film.

Fig. 2 – Magazine Section of the time (Image source**:** Film/Art Gallery)

The 1970's was a period of filmmaking often associated with auteur-directors pushing the boundaries of cinematic storytelling. Miloš Forman was part of this movement, and *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* reflects the era's interest in exploring complex characters and social issues on screen. The film's themes of challenging authority and resisting oppressive systems were in line with the changing perceptions of authority in American society at that time. For example, the Watergate scandal eroded trust in institutions and power for decades to come.

Initially impossible to handle, *One Flew*… remained a book that in the movie industry "nobody dared to touch" (Mikulec, 2016). The film's release in 1975 positioned it as a part of the New Hollywood movement, which brought about a new wave of artistic and innovative filmmaking. The film's success at the Academy Awards, winning all five major categories (Best Picture, Director, Actor, Actress, Adapted Screenplay), showcases its cultural impact.

In this climate of social change, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* was well received by audiences and critics. The film's exploration of themes related to authority, individuality, and resistance resonated with broader cultural conversations of the time.

Ken Kesey had mixed feelings about the movie adaptation directed by Miloš Forman though. Kesey himself was not directly involved in the creation of the film, and he had reservations about how his novel was translated to the screen. He was involved in a legal dispute with the film's producers over the rights to the story (Ledbetter, 1976). He believed that the movie deviated significantly from his novel and that it did not capture the essence of his work as he had envisioned it. Kesey chose not to see the film initially and encouraged others to do the same. He expressed dissatisfaction with the cinematic depiction of the characters and the narrative in the film adaptation of his novel, particularly with regards to the character Chief Bromden. Eventually Kesey viewed the film and, while still holding reservations, approved the strength of the performances, particularly Jack Nicholson's portrayal of McMurphy.

The movie garnered widespread critical acclaim and achieved significant cultural impact. It received numerous Oscars, including the Best Picture award, and contributed to the enduring popularity of the novel.

Mining The Nest: Hospice Words

In this article, we tried to show the continuous potential of text mining tools and practices with Voyant, to briefly emphasize the different linguistic correlations within the book regarding the most frequent terms, in general, and the lexical family of mental illness terms in a comparative way between the book and the script in particular.

Voyant Tools was developed by Stéfan Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell, two scholars in the discipline of digital humanities. They created the software to guide textual content analysis and visualization for researchers and educators. The preliminary development of Voyant Tools began in the mid-2000s, and it has undergone a couple of updates and upgrades (Rockwell & Sinclair, 2022).

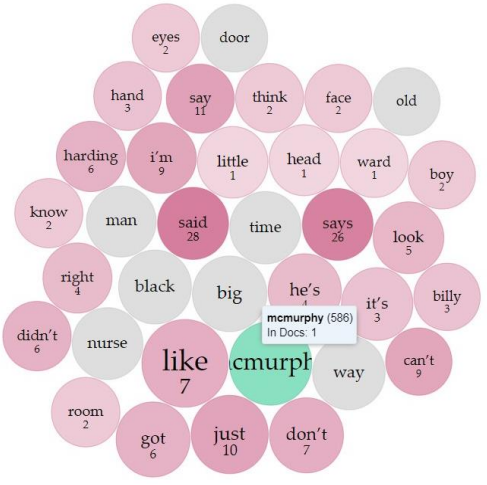

Fig. 3 – Word Berries beautify terms correlations

One of the standout features of Voyant Tools is its capacity to generate textual data and interactive statistical visualizations. Researchers can create word clouds, scatterplots, and different graphical representations of the textual content, which simplifies the identification of routine motifs and literary tendencies, additionally beautifying the presentation of the study's findings.

Following the words and writing pattern in the book, the Cirrus tool (word cloud recurrences) shows that the action revolves around the main character Randle McMurphy (mentioned 586 times), that the characters are mostly men ('he', 288 times), a term that can be joined to that of 'man' (220 times). A virtuoso of onomatopoeia and satire, 'like' (777!) is the verb (and the adverb) that illustrates not only the novel's ironic dynamism, but also the insinuating presence of a false, calm atmosphere. 'Black' (295) is a term with frequent recurrence. Many gender analyses of the novel nuance the simplistic contexts in which ethnicities and genders are or are not discriminated against by black employees of the hospital or female staff. 'Harding' (208) is the secondary character that the author, through Chief Bromden's voice, mentions most of the time.

Document Terms

#	Term	Count	Relative	Trend
1	nurse	279	11,012	
1	room	136	5,368	
1	head	38	1,500	
1	doctor	30	1,184	
1	ward	21	829	
1	group	14	553	
1	pill*	13	513	
1	patient	12	474	
1	water	9	355	
1	lobotomy	7	276	
1	lobo*	7	276	
1	therapy	5	197	
1	psych*	5	197	
1	shock	3	118	
1	therapeutic	2	79	
1	"shock therapy"	2	79	
1	ill*	1	39	

Fig. 4 – Looked terms, their raw count, relative score, and weight

In juxtaposition with McMurhpy's revolt, the popular term 'nurse' (238) that, in the book, refers both to Chief Ratched, and less frequently to Flinn, is the most used. In the same register of mental health, the term with the highest frequency is 'head' (219). Patients vegetate in 'room'-s (193) or 'wards' (182), 'look' (235) a lot, and 'say' (236) as much; they possess 'little' (229) but have plenty of 'time' (249). The linearity of recurrences visually provided by Voyant can help the researcher reach the desired context in one of the ten segments of the book.[1]

#	TERM	COUNT	Z-SCORE[2]
0	nurse	238	1.8996204
0	head	219	1.7387238
0	room	193	1.5185494
0	ward	182	1.4253987

[1] The 10-part segmentation was set in the Voyant Tools options.

[2] The Z-Score represents the standard deviation taken from the field of Statistics. In the corpus of a text, the Z-score for a term is the calculated value for the recurrence of that term compared to other recurrences of other terms, according to their sum as a whole or by the segment of a textbook.

0	doctor	159	1.2306291
0	water	65	0.43461418
0	group	39	0.21443982
0	pill*[3]	38	0.20597158
0	patient	29	0.12975739
0	shock	28	0.12128914
0	psych*	23	0.078947924
0	therapeutic	20	0.053543188
0	therapy	9	-0.039607495
0	psychopath	9	-0.039607495
0	ill*	8	-0.04807574
0	lobotomy	5	-0.07348047
0	'shock therapy'	3	-0.09041696

Fig. 5 – The total count and the Z-score of the medical (re)searched term

Other terms complete the medical lexical family when Kesey is not juggling jargon and slang terms or when he is not using euphemisms. Among psychiatric medical practices ('psych*iatry' 5), the lobotomy ('lobo*tomy' 7) with which McMurphy's rebellion and the individual himself were extinguished is rarely mentioned in its proper sense.

Other controversial methods of one of the most serious social themes of the '60s the '70s also involved electroshock ('shock'^'therapy' 3). In the novel, hydrotherapy ('water'^'therapy' 65) is often used as a form of punishment or as a means of controlling the patients, particularly those who act out or defy the hospital's strict rules and Nurse Ratched's authority. It is portrayed as a dehumanizing and often abusive practice as patients are forced to undergo treatment against their will. The other non-brutal interventions, but imposed most of the time on the 'patient'-s (12) through rigidity or the imperative orders of the absent 'doctor'-s (159) are the mandatory 'pill'-s (16), the military like enforced 'sleep*' (28), or the 'group' (39) 'therapies' (9).

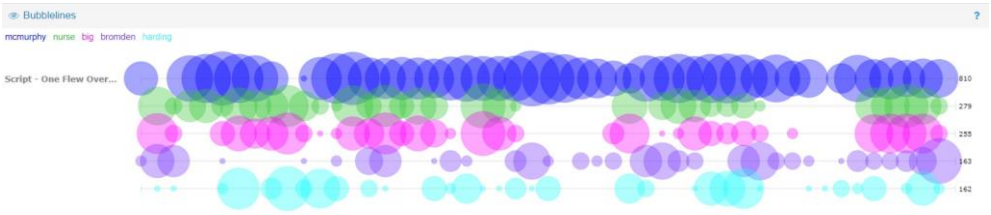

Fig. 6 – Granularity of main terms throughout the novel

In the camp of the oppressive system, it is surprising that Nurse 'Ratched' is formally nominated relatively few times (46), while Nurse Flinn is barely named (3). The visual section dedicated to trends marks very clearly the proportions in which a term appears throughout the book.

[3] The wildcard can stand for a prefix, lexical suffix or even another term. The exponential sign (^) used only in conjuction with the wildcard (*) can extract or refer to a separate term.

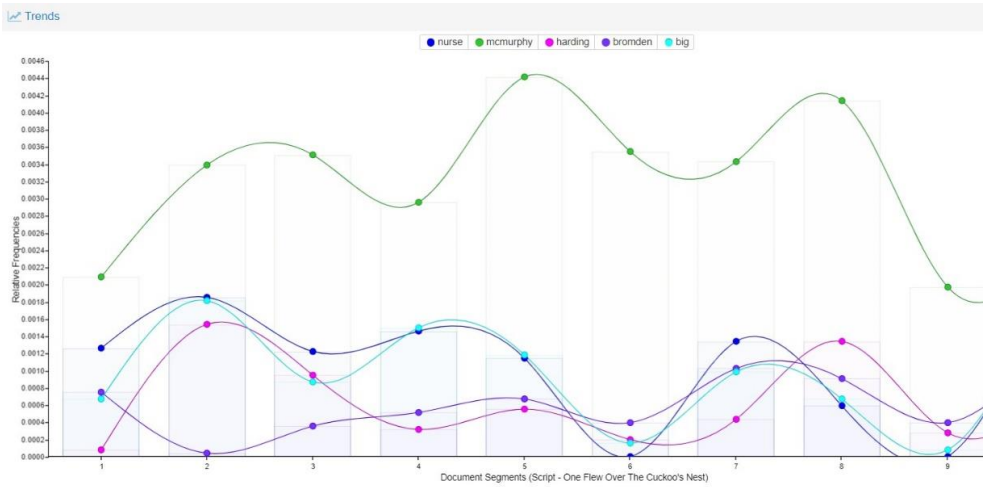

Fig. 7 – 'Trends' showing the frequency of certain terms throughout the book

In the script written by Lawrence Hauben and Bo Goldman, Cirrus brings out the same great recurrences, keeping the proportionality imposed by the rigors of a relatively small text compared to the original work, while other new terms name the protagonists or the indications given to the characters, since the cinematic means substitute or suggests actions, images and gestures without naming them.

#	TERM	COUNT	RELATIVE[4]
0	nurse	279	11011.564
0	room	136	5367.644
0	head	38	1499.783
0	doctor	30	1184.0392
0	ward	21	828.8274
0	group	14	552.5516
0	pill*	13	513.0837
0	patient	12	473.61566
0	water	9	355.21176
0	lobotomy	7	276.2758
0	lobo*	7	276.2758
0	therapy	5	197.33986
0	psych*	5	197.33986
0	shock	3	118.403915
0	therapeutic	2	78.93594
0	'shock therapy'	2	78.93594
0	ill*	1	39.46797

Fig. 8 – The total term count and the relative score of the looked terms

[4] The relative score equals the raw frequency (count) divided by the total number of terms in the document, which is then multiplied by one million.

We aimed to provide the main picture, then examine the weight, granularity and recurrences of the same terms in the book, in order to trace schematically how the screenwriters worked on the screenplay version. The direct hints about Randle McMurphy (mentioned 586 times) are followed, this time by the narrator from the book, 'Chief Bromden' (163), portrayed in the film by Will Sampson. 'Harding' (162) no longer occupies the onomastic podium: 'Billy' (152) and 'Martini' (125) are often mentioned, and 'Turkle' (99) and 'Washington' (121) are among the antagonists with the most frequent occurrences. The "like" (32) atmosphere preserves its apparent sumptuousness under which the 'big' (225) individual and collective conflicts over 'The Big Nurse' ('nurse' - 279) smolder. 'Room'-s (136) are often mentioned, as are 'day'-s (121). Regarding linguistic correlations, the patient 'fights', 'moves', 'leaves', 'goes' to the 'doctor'-s, 'creates' 'disturbance'-s and ultimately 'fade*'.

Correlations

Term 1	←	→	Term 2	Correlation...	Significanc...
fight			patient	0.96428573	0.0000068...
inmates			patient	0.9211324	0.0001537...
moves			patient	0.9027939	0.0003468...
cigarette			patient	0.8943244	0.0004794...
ad			patient	0.8875895	0.0006086...
est			patient	0.8728716	0.0009774...
america			patient	0.8728716	0.0009774...
bless			patient	0.8728716	0.0009774...
ca			patient	0.8728716	0.0009774...
carton			patient	0.8728716	0.0009774...
dorms			patient	0.8728716	0.0009774...
na			patient	0.8728716	0.0009774...
gurney			patient	0.8507798	0.0018043...
itsu			patient	0.8505691	0.001814089
doctor			patient	0.82735956	0.0031377...
leaving			patient	0.8261596	0.003220951
da			patient	0.80087787	0.005366929
disturbance			patient	0.80087787	0.005366929
fade			patient	0.80087787	0.005366929
bit			patient	0.79254246	0.0062556...
caught			patient	0.78571427	0.0070579...
left			patient	0.78571427	0.0070579...
body			patient	0.7671932	0.009598036

837 minimum coverage (%100)

Fig. 9 – Terms main 'Correlations' showcasing 'patient' proximity frequency with other lexical elements

Conclusions

Even for basic quantitative analysis of vocabulary, phrase usage, and stylistic analysis, Voyant Tools remains a crucial software in the toolkit of a digital philologist. Through its ability to synthesize summaries, fundamental recurrences, and quantitative searches, Voyant provides a means to arrive at an impressive qualitative analysis. After the paintings were impressively created by Kesey in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, with which the author illustrates, in his unique style of humor, sarcasm, and irony, the atmosphere of a mental asylum – an atmosphere that can be quite easily correlated with the dimension of the dysfunctional lot of institutions from any country, not necessarily the post-Vietnam United States –, with Voyant Tools, comparative analysis can be done with other works that are based on the same topic. Power in numbers is still a power, mostly in the linguistic space.

A comprehensive qualitative study could comparatively examine how the literature of a particular era explored the subject matter of medical institutions, physicians, and the perception, comprehension, and portrayal of mental disorders in societies, media, or other scholarly publications of that time.

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Dal teatro al cinema: la rappresentazione del Lager nazista nel passaggio dal testo teatrale *Il vicario* (1963) di Rolf Hochhuth al suo adattamento cinematografico *Amen.* (2002) di Costa-Gavras

From Theatre to Cinema: The Representation of the Nazi Lager in the Transition from the Play *The Deputy* (1963) by Rolf Hochhuth to Its Film Adaptation *Amen.* (2002) by Costa-Gavras

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Parole chiave

Auschwitz; Belzec; irrappresentabile; Shoah; Hochhuth; *Vicario*; Costa-Gavras.

Amen., film del 2002 di Costa-Gavras, è l'adattamento cinematografico della celebre opera teatrale *Il vicario* (1963) di Rolf Hochhuth. Nel complesso, l'opera di Costa-Gavras è molto fedele al testo originale di Hochhuth: la trama è rispettata, i personaggi gli stessi. Di conseguenza, se con il seguente studio abbiamo scelto di focalizzare la nostra attenzione sul passaggio del testo di Hochhuth dalla scena allo schermo è in virtù di un dettaglio puramente estetico: in particolare, ci riferiamo a quelle poche scene in cui, tanto nella pièce che nel film, l'azione drammatica si sposta improvvisamente all'interno di un campo di sterminio nazista. Ora, come rappresentare lo sterminio, il *Lager*, su una scena teatrale? E come farlo, invece, al cinema? Rispetto al modo in cui Hochhuth, a teatro, e quindi attingendo eventualmente più al simbolico che alla verosimiglianza scenica, ha potuto immaginare di mostrare l'orrore, con quali soluzioni di continuità o di rottura intervenire al contrario al cinema?

Keywords

Auschwitz; Belzec; unrepresentable; Shoah; Hochhuth; *Deputy*; Costa-Gravas.

Amen. (2002), by Costa-Gavras, is the film adaptation of the famous play *The Deputy* (1963), by Rolf Hochhuth. In general, Costa-Gavras' work is very faithful to Hochhuth's original text: the intrigue is respected, same as the characters. Therefore, if we have chosen, with the following study, to focus our attention on the passage of Hochhuth's text from the stage to the screen, it is in virtue of a purely aesthetic detail: in particular, we refer to those few scenes in which, both in the play and in the film, the dramatic action suddenly shifts to the interior of a Nazi extermination camp. So, how to represent the extermination, the *Lager*, on a theatrical stage? And how to do it, instead, on the screen? Given the way in which in theatre, possibly drawing more on the symbolic than on scenic verisimilitude, Hochhuth was able to dramatize horror, what solutions of continuity or rupture should be adopted, on the contrary, in cinema?

Fatta eccezione per qualche grande classico della drammaturgia, è abbastanza inusuale trovare dei film tratti da testi teatrali. Non che il cinema, ben inteso, sia del tutto indifferente alle mode e alle logiche rappresentative del teatro: si pensi, a tal proposito, all'avvento della tecnologia 3D, la quale, per un tipo di arte così naturalmente refrattaria alla partecipazione attiva del pubblico come lo è il cinema, costituisce un punto di compromesso molto vicino al teatro. Ciononostante, è altrettanto indiscutibile che le aspettative figurative che sottendono generalmente la nascita di una sceneggiatura cinematografica siano in realtà molto lontane da quelle proprie di un testo teatrale. In un film, infatti, al di là di alcune problematiche relative all'etica delle immagini proposte, il fatto di *mostrare* è qualcosa di tecnicamente sempre possibile. Ciò è permesso, in primo luogo, dai numerosi effetti speciali – accompagnati, per esempio, da tecniche come quella del campo-controcampo e della soggettiva, piuttosto che dall'utilizzo del carrello o di lunghi piani-sequenza in movimento. Senza contare, inoltre, l'importanza del montaggio, che è uno strumento in grado di offrire ad ogni regista la possibilità di cambiare rapidamente il tempo e lo spazio dell'azione drammatici, dando così grande libertà di movimento ai personaggi, nonché un respiro molto ampio alla storia in quanto tale. Al contrario, il teatro, che è un mezzo espressivo interamente basato sull'immediatezza del confronto tra attore e spettatore, è stato fin dalle sue origini portato a configurarsi come uno spazio più di critica che di cronaca: vale a dire, come uno spazio il cui potere d'illusione dipendesse più dalla forza comunicativa della parola (dialogo o *récit*) che dalla ricerca dell'immagine verosimile. Una questione come quella della rappresentazione scenica della violenza, per non fare che l'esempio forse più emblematico, resta infatti ancora oggi un vero e proprio tabù per il teatro. E ciò, a tal punto che, volendo trovare un punto di raccordo tra la drammaturgia greca classica, quella romantica di autori come Racine e Kleist, fino ad arrivare a tutta la corrente, oggi dominante, del cosiddetto «Teatro di narrazione», esso sembri di fatto risiedere – come avrebbe detto Roland Barthes – nel motivo dell'«Anti-Camera» (1963: 16): ovvero, la scena teatrale alla stregua di uno spazio-soglia, in cui i personaggi/attori raccontano di una *praxis* che si è invece svolta altrove.

Tali considerazioni, ne siamo coscienti, sono di carattere generale. Pertanto, obiettivo del seguente studio sarà quello di illustrarle tramite l'aiuto di un esempio concreto, basato sul confronto diretto tra alcune scene di *Il vicario* (1963), testo drammatico in cinque atti di Rolf Hochhuth, con altre tratte dal suo adattamento cinematografico successivo, *Amen.*, ad opera del regista greco Costa-Gavras.

A livello di trama, a dire il vero, queste due opere si somigliano molto, cosicché risulta abbastanza agevole riconoscere nella seconda un riadattamento della prima. Tanto nell'una che nell'altra, quindi, la storia – ispirata peraltro da fatti reali – ruota più o meno attorno ai due stessi personaggi, che sono, in ordine di apparizione: 1) Kurt Gerstein, un ingegnere delle *Waffen-SS*, ma pentito del suo ruolo, dopo esser stato testimone del funzionamento delle camere a gas nel campo di sterminio di Belzec (Polonia); 2) Riccardo Fontana, un giovane prete cattolico di Roma il quale, avendo provato invano a risvegliare la coscienza delle gerarchie vaticane in merito alla questione dello sterminio degli ebrei, finirà per sacrificare la sua stessa vita ad Auschwitz. Da un lato, è vero che l'opera teatrale, in cui questi due personaggi si dividono in modo più equo la scena, si sofferma con più forza sul motivo del silenzio da parte di Papa Pio XII, mentre il film, privilegiando fin dall'inizio mettere l'accento sulle tappe della *conversione* di Gerstein, permette allo spettatore di addentrarsi maggiormente all'interno dei meandri della macchina burocratica/ideologica del Reich. Premesso ciò, tuttavia, è innegabile che la sintonia tra le due opere sia costante, la qual cosa è peraltro ben dimostrata anche dal

fatto che la gran parte degli interventi di Costa-Gavras sul testo originale di Hochhuth sia consistita fondamentalmente nel ridurre battute di dialogo – se non addirittura nel tagliarle in certi casi –, ma non certo nell'inventare nuovi personaggi.

Trama a parte, dunque, se abbiamo scelto di focalizzare la nostra attenzione sul passaggio del testo di Hochhuth dalla scena allo schermo è in virtù di un dettaglio puramente estetico: un dettaglio relativo soltanto a poche scene, ma già più che sintomatico, a nostro avviso, di come un drammaturgo e un cineasta, pur auspicando entrambi un certo approccio figurativo, ragionino in realtà secondo ipotesi di lavoro molto diverse tra loro. Nel caso specifico, ci riferiamo a quelle poche scene in cui, tanto nella pièce (Hochhuth) che nel film (Costa-Gavras), l'azione drammatica si sposta all'interno di un campo di sterminio nazista. Qui, di conseguenza, il cuore della questione: rispetto al modo in cui un autore teatrale, attingendo eventualmente più al simbolico che alla verosimiglianza scenica, può immaginare di trasmettere l'orrore di una simile sequenza, con quali soluzioni di continuità o di rottura un cineasta dovrebbe invece intervenire? Come poter mostrare lo sterminio a teatro? E come, al contrario, al cinema?

Sia per Hochhuth che per Costa-Gavras, all'inizio, la sfida era più o menola stessa, dal momento che l'orrore quotidiano di un luogo come un campo di sterminio sembra conservare in sé qualcosa di profondamente contrario al concetto medesimo di rappresentazione (artistica). E uguale, significativamente, è stata anche la conclusione a cui entrambi gli artisti sono arrivati, nel senso che nessuno dei due, ad esempio, ha mai spinto l'azione drammatica all'interno di una camera a gas, né ha mostrato scene di tortura e di violenza esplicite. Nel mezzo, tuttavia, vedremo che le strade seguite da Hochhuth e Costa-Gavras sono state concettualmente molto diverse, a seconda delle possibilità tecniche e delle peculiarità dei due mezzi espressivi (teatro e cinema) di loro riferimento. Per Hochhuth, infatti, ancor prima di capire come rappresentare teatralmente un *Lager*[1], il problema era legato a come portare in scena la situazione violenta in quanto tale, considerato che l'immanenza del teatro – per le ragioni sottolineate precedentemente – non sembrerebbe certo essere il veicolo più ideale a tal fine. Mentre per Costa-Gavras, il quale disponeva, al cinema, di una quantità di strumenti tecnici potenzialmente maggiore per poter creare l'illusione (della verosimiglianza), il problema era inverso, ed era semmai quello, in altre parole, di evitare il feticismo e un'eccessiva spettacolarizzazione delle immagini – dietro cui entrambi i fenomeni, in relazione allo sterminio, potrebbe sempre celarsi un voyeurismo particolarmente immorale.

Per rispettare l'ordine cronologico, inizieremo le nostre riflessioni prendendo in considerazione il testo teatrale di Hochhuth. Tale scelta, peraltro, rifletterà anche ragioni di chiarezza espositiva, tenuto conto che il film di Costa-Gavras ne è l'adattamento cinematografico successivo.

[1] Nel seguente studio, il lettore non potrà fare a meno di notare la continua alternanza di termini come «*Lager*» e «campo di sterminio». Senza entrare eccessivamente nel dettaglio, limitiamoci a precisare che, laddove verrà utilizzata l'espressione di «*Lager*», la nostra idea sarà sempre quella di accennare all'universo concentrazionario nella sua complessità: non solo ai «campi di sterminio», insomma, ma anche ai «campi di concentramento», ai «campi di lavoro» e ai «campi di smistamento». Ogniqualvolta parleremo di «campo di sterminio», invece, sarà per riferirsi più particolarmente a quella sotto-categoria di *Lager* la cui funzione primaria era quella dell'annientamento dei deportati. Cosa distingue un «campo di concentramento» da uno di «sterminio»? La presenza di camere a gas all'interno del loro perimetro, ad esempio, è il fattore discriminante per eccellenza.

Il teatro alla prova del *Lager*: il paradigma pionieristico di Hochhuth

In virtù della natura estremamente violenta di un evento come la Shoah, non deve stupire che il teatro abbia sempre preferito avvicinarsi alla sua rappresentazione scenica con enorme discrezione. Robert Skloot, tra i primi, nel 1982, a tracciare un bilancio esaustivo sul «Teatro dell'Olocausto» (1982: 17), accennava già allora al «dilemma» (17) che tormentava i drammaturghi del dopoguerra, presi tra il desiderio di adottare un approccio realistico nei confronti dello sterminio e l'impossibilità di portarlo in scena in modo verosimile:

> The playwrights must decide what picture of the world of the Holocaust is to be visually presented […]. But since the world of the ghettos and concentration camps is impossible to duplicate on the stage, the writer of the Holocaust is caught in a dilemma: how to give stage images their full burden of meaning without making them unrecognizable through abstraction or untruthful through replication. In reaction to just this situation, criticism of the Theatre of the Holocaust often makes two opposite arguments: that a realistic approach is a falsification of the subject and that an abstract approach is a betrayal of it. (17)

Il che è già di per sé sufficiente, concentrandoci questa volta più particolarmente sui drammi ambientati ad Auschwitz o in altri campi di sterminio, a giustificare il relativo ritardo delle loro prime messinscene. Seguendo infatti le parole di Edward Isser:

> Death camp dramas are those works that attempt to represent the unimaginable process of mechanized extermination. They are the rarest and, without exception, the most problematic type of plays in the subgenre of Holocaust drama. […] In the 1950s no playwright dared to represent a killing center on the stage. In the 1960s, however, three important European works provided paradigmatic models for future Anglo-American representations: Jerzy Grotowski's *Akropolis*, Rolf Hochhuth's *The Deputy*, and Charlotte Delbo's *Who will Carry the Word.* (1997: 24-25)

Isser colloca qui le opere di Delbo, Grotowski e Hochhuth come il vero punto di partenza dei «drammi dei campi di sterminio» («Death camp dramas»), sottolineando indirettamente il ruolo che il Processo Eichmann – il processo al burocrate nazista si svolse a Gerusalemme nel 1961 – avrebbe poi avuto nel rilanciare il tema della *questione ebraica* nel mondo occidentale[2]. Detto ciò, la prima cosa che colpisce quando si constata, con Isser, la rarità dei «drammi dei campo di sterminio» e il ritardo delle loro prime messinscene, è la complessità del dibattito critico che queste opere hanno ogni volta generato nel panorama teatrale. Del resto, prove ne è che, fin dalla prima metà degli anni Sessanta, è quasi impossibile trovare un drammaturgo che non abbia deliberatamente cercato, anche solo a titolo di giustificazione, di accompagnare il suo «dramma del campo di sterminio» con un apparato critico parallelo (interviste, seminari, manifesti teatrali, ecc.) volto ad illustrare in modo più chiaro le sue scelte estetiche.

Siamo consapevoli che il tema della rarità dei «drammi» teatrali sui campi di sterminio meriterebbe ulteriore approfondimento. Non abbiamo il tempo di farlo in questa sede e, d'altronde, non è questo l'argomento principale del seguente paragrafo, dedicato invece alla sola analisi dell'approccio figurativo (di un campo di sterminio) da parte di Hochhuth in *Il*

[2] Per ulteriori approfondimenti in merito a questa questione, non possiamo che consigliare la lettura dell'opera *Le moment Eichmann* (2016), coordinata da Sylvie Lindeperg e Annette Wieviorka.

vicario. Al contrario, se abbiamo ritenuto fondamentale aprire questo paragrafo riportando le tesi di Skloot e di Isser, è perché esse ci forniscono una rapida panoramica del quadro teatrale entro cui lo stesso Hochhuth – lui più di chiunque altro, in quanto uno dei pionieri del cosiddetto «dramma del campo di sterminio» – si sia di fatto ritrovato ad agire. Da un lato, infatti, esse ci permettono di afferrare immediatamente la problematica maggiore legata ad un tale tipo di approccio figurativo: il rischio di tradire la vera natura dell'evento genocidario, e quindi, in qualche modo, di falsificarlo. Mentre dall'altro lato, in conseguenza del fatto che i «drammi del campo di sterminio» non si sono certo fermati ad autori come Delbo, Grotowski e Hochhuth, esse lasciano altresì intravedere la volontà da parte del teatro di non sottrarsi ad un tale sfida estetica – il cui rifiuto, per questa forma d'arte, sarebbe stato invece indicativo della presenza di un tabù rappresentativo.

Questi due elementi, sintetizzabili dunque nel timore di tradire la natura profonda dell'evento e, parallelamente, nel dovere di portarlo in scena *malgré tout*, per non cedere al tabù, attraverseranno da parte a parte anche il testo di Hochhuth, a tal punto – come vedremo in seguito – da essere addirittura tematizzati dallo stesso autore nelle note di regia del suo testo teatrale. Tuttavia, ancor prima di esaminare il modo in cui Hochhuth abbia immaginato di portare in scena un campo di sterminio, ripercorriamo velocemente la trama della pièce. Ciò risulterà tanto più utile, infatti, in quanto il passaggio di *setting* all'interno del campo (Auschwitz), nel testo di Hochhuth, avverrà in un punto molto preciso e delicato della storia, ossia alla conclusione, nel quinto atto, laddove si accumulerà altresì la maggiore tensione drammatica.

Il vicario debutta, per così dire, *in medias res*, con Gerstein che è già stato al campo di sterminio di Belzec e che, di ritorno in Germania, inizia a muovere i primi passi per informare il Nunzio Apostolico in carica a Berlino a proposito di ciò che ha «visto» (Hochhuth, 1964: 46) in Polonia. Ottenuto un ricevimento, l'accoglienza da parte del Nunzio è piuttosto fredda, anche perché l'uniforme delle SS indossata da Gerstein fa temere al primo una provocazione nazista. Ciononostante, tra i partecipanti al colloquio, c'è anche un giovane prete italiano, Riccardo Fontana, che crede a Gerstein e che di conseguenza, all'insaputa del Nunzio, si propone di trasmettere il suo messaggio alla Santa Sede di Roma.

Il primo atto («La missione») si svolge dunque interamente a Berlino, e mette altresì in scena qualche sequenza in cui ritroviamo Gerstein immischiato in una serie di conversazioni con membri di spicco del Reich, tra i quali addirittura Eichmann. Tra i vari temi di discussione, il principale è ancora una volta quello inerente alle nuove tecniche sperimentate nei campi di sterminio per gasare i deportati – anche se qui è il punto di vista dei carnefici che viene ascoltato. Ad ogni modo, quel che è interessante notare fin da questo primo atto, dal dialogo di Gerstein con il Nunzio e Fontana fino a quello con Eichmann e le altre SS, è che il campo di sterminio, benché sempre *off stage*, si viene subito a configurare come il vero protagonista della pièce. Tutti i personaggi ne parlano, nello stesso modo in cui, quale una sorta di personaggio-zero della storia, esso permette di manifestare le loro divisioni psicologiche e morali. Inoltre, così facendo, è come se Hochhuth instaurasse sottilmente nel pubblico qualcosa come un'attesa, una suspense: l'attesa di vedere (il campo di sterminio), per poter mettere alla prova i vari *récits* ascoltati.

Nel secondo («La campane di San Pietro»), nel terzo («Le prove») e nel quarto atto («Il grande rifiuto»), il *setting* della pièce si sposta invece da Berlino a Roma. Il *setting* cambia, ma il paradigma narrativo no: dimodoché, fatta eccezione per il terzo atto – in cui Hochhuth drammatizza essenzialmente il rastrellamento occorso ad una famiglia ebrea nel ghetto di Roma

–, sono ancora la riflessione, il dialogo e il *logos* a prendere largamente il sopravvento su tutto il resto. Nel secondo atto, ad esempio, la trama ruota intorno a Fontana, che vediamo infatti in procinto di comunicare il messaggio di Gerstein a suo padre e un altro sacerdote, entrambi molto vicini al Papa. Mentre nel quarto atto – che valse molte critiche allo stesso Hochhuth da parte del Vaticano[3] –, al centro della scena troviamo addirittura il Papa, Pio XII. Da un lato, abbiamo Fontana e suo padre che insistono affinché il vicario di Cristo rilasci una dichiarazione pubblica contro la «Soluzione finale». Dall'altro, invece, troviamo tutto il realismo politico del Vaticano, che vede al contrario in Hitler un possibile alleato contro i bolscevichi. La delusione di Fontana per il silenzio di Pio XII è enorme, ed è in questo preciso contesto, ossia alla fine del quarto atto, che il giovane prete inizia a meditare di accompagnare un gruppo di ebrei di Roma nei campi di sterminio, ad Auschwitz nel caso specifico, per condividerne il destino.

Questo, a grandi linee, è il riassunto dei primi quattro atti della pièce. Fin dall'inizio, come detto, il centro di gravità della pièce è il campo di sterminio: questo, in altre parole, è l'oggetto di interesse dei discorsi di tutti i personaggi – benché pochi di loro, in realtà, lo abbiano visto. Ma una volta giunti a questo punto della storia, come proseguire? Seguire Fontana nel suo martirio ad Auschwitz, fin dentro Auschwitz, oppure raccontarlo tramite il *récit* di un altro personaggio, con il *logos*, da un salotto di Roma o di Berlino?

È facile intuire che per una pièce come *Il vicario*, molto vicina a quel filone del «Teatro documentario» molto in voga ad inizio degli anni '60, tale questione ne riprendesse ugualmente un'altra, questa volta di natura prima di tutto storica. Qui, infatti, è d'obbligo il confronto con un'altra pièce su Auschwitz molto famosa, anch'essa rientrante nel filone del «Teatro documentario»: *L'istruttoria* (1965) di Peter Weiss. In questa pièce, costruita interamente su una parte delle vere deposizioni registrate durante i processi di Francoforte del 1963 ai danni di 22 imputati nazisti, il disegno del drammaturgo tedesco era anzitutto quello di elaborare una forma drammatica efficace per portare in scena l'archivio, il documento storico, nel modo più oggettivo possibile. Nel «Teatro documentario», almeno teoricamente, l'imprecisione e l'«invenzione» (Weiss, 1968: 374) dovevano essere fin da subito escluse, come del resto precisava lo stesso Weiss nelle sue *Notizen zum dokumentarischen Theater* (*Note sul Teatro documentario*, 1968)[4]. E così di seguito, dunque, per i luoghi, ovvero per il *setting*, per la scelta delle ambientazioni drammatiche: d'altra parte, se Weiss, con *L'istruttoria*, una pièce su Auschwitz, ha optato per sviluppare la trama interamente in un tribunale e non all'interno del campo polacco durante lo sterminio, è perché considerava che gli sarebbe stato impossibile ricostruire l'atmosfera di questo luogo nell'ordine del verosimile (scenico e storico); è perché sapeva fin troppo bene, insomma, che avrebbe dovuto «inventare». Ora, per tornare ad Hochhuth e al suo *Il vicario*: come raccogliere l'*interdit* di Weiss? Mostrare, ma tradendo così la prima regola del «Teatro documentario», ossia quella dell'oggettività? Oppure non mostrare, ma rischiando, in questo caso, di fare di Auschwitz un mito, un Dio, tanto più impenetrabile in quanto invisibile agli occhi dei credenti (gli spettatori)?

Sappiamo che con *Il vicario*, contrariamente a Weiss, Hochhuth ha preferito intraprendere la prima strada, ovvero quella figurativa. Ciononostante, riconoscendo ciò che una tale scelta

[3] Per una raccolta completa delle prime critiche, dei saggi e degli articoli che sono stati scritti a proposito della pièce di Hochhuth, non possiamo che rimandare alla pubblicazione di Eric Bentley, *The Storm Over* The Deputy, pubblicata già nel 1964.

[4] Citiamo questo scritto di Weiss dalla sua traduzione francese, la quale è stata pubblicata dalla rivista *Le Théâtre dans le monde* con il titolo «Quatorze Thèses à propos du Théâtre documentaire». L'anno di questa pubblicazione, il 1968, è lo stesso della versione originale tedesca.

avrebbe implicato nel giudizio stesso della sua opera da parte di altri autori *documentaristi* come Weiss, Hochhuth si è mosso non senza prendere qualche dovuto accorgimento preliminare. Tutto, curiosamente, è scritto nel suo testo teatrale, in esergo al quinto atto della pièce («Auschwitz, o il problema di Dio»), a mo' di premessa all'*entrata* effettiva ad Auschwitz. Qui, infatti, Hochhuth compie qualcosa di insolito, qualcosa che, prima di lui, pochi altri drammaturghi avevano osato fare: in breve, mette in pausa il dramma per rivolgersi direttamente al lettore del suo testo teatrale – non, quindi, allo spettatore –, in modo tale da spiegare le sue scelte in fatto di personaggi e, soprattutto, di *setting*. Le pagine che Hochhuth destina a tale fine sono all'incirca otto, un'enormità per un testo drammatico. Pertanto, in linea con gli obiettivi del nostro studio, ci limiteremo a citarne i due frammenti più significativi: l'uno, in cui l'autore esprime la sua necessità, *malgré tout*, di avere un approccio ancora figurativo nei confronti di Auschwitz; e l'altro, invece, in cui inizia di fatto a descrivere le sue scelte scenografiche.

Prima di tutto, dunque, la giustificazione, l'argomentazione filosofica:

> Caratteristica comune alle conquiste e alle scoperte della nostra epoca è il loro superare i limiti dell'immaginazione umana. Nessuna fantasia arriva a rappresentare Auschwitz o la distruzione di Dresda o Hiroshima […]. L'uomo non arriva più a comprendere le proprie conquiste.
> Perciò il problema se e come dovevamo rappresentare Auschwitz in questo testo, ha costituito per noi a lungo un difficile quesito. Il naturalismo documentaristico ha ormai cessato di valere come principio stilistico. […] D'altra parte ci sembrava pericoloso servirci dell'evocazione lirica; come ha fatto Celan nella sua bellissima poesia «Todesfuge», dove ha rappresentato la morte per gas degli ebrei traducendola in metafore quali:
>
> «Latte nero dell'alba lo beviamo la sera
> Lo beviamo a mezzogiorno e la mattina lo beviamo la notte.»
>
> Perché, per quanto grande sia la suggestione che nasce dalle parole e dal suono, le metafore nascondono troppo bene l'infernale cinismo di questa realtà, che già di per sé è realtà esasperata oltre ogni misura – di modo che l'impressione di irrealtà, che ne scaturisce, già oggi, quindici anni dopo questi avvenimenti, favorisce la nostra pronunciata tendenza a considerare tale realtà una leggenda, a giudicarla incredibile come una fiaba apocalittica. (Hochhuth, 1964: 319-320)

In questa sola pagina del testo teatrale, è riunito l'essenziale di un dibattito valido tanto allora quanto oggi. 1) Fin dalle prime righe, ritroviamo tematizzato il motivo dell'impossibilità da parte dell'arte – l'arte in generale, nemmeno più solo il teatro – di stare al passo con il contemporaneo. In particolare, proprio perché non è il primo a farla, è interessante l'associazione fatta da Hochhuth tra Auschwitz ed altri eventi storici vicini nel tempo, quali per esempio Hiroshima. È sicuro, infatti, che Hochhuth conoscesse molto bene la celebre conferenza del 1954 di Friedrich Dürrenmatt «Theaterprobleme» (*Il problema del teatro*), in cui il drammaturgo svizzero, chiedendosi già allora se il mondo di oggi potesse essere ancora reso attraverso il teatro, sdoganava curiosamente l'immagine dell'esplosione atomica come emblema di un sublime che nessun artista avrebbe potuto mai più ricreare. Con paralleli ed immagini

molto simili, tanto Hochhuth che Dürrenmatt ci riportano dunque al *qui* e *ora* della scena del crimine: ormai, sembrano dirci, è soltanto nel momento del dispiegamento dell'orrore sproporzionato che la vera arte si manifesterebbe, e non più altrove, vale a dire nel processo mimetico della replica. 2) Successivamente, è senz'altro rilevante la menzione fatta da Hochhuth in merito alla poesia simbolista di Paul Celan, *Fuga di morte*, scritta nel 1945. L'ammirazione del drammaturgo per quest'ultima non è in discussione: si tratta di una poesia «bellissima», come viene del resto riportato nel testo teatrale. Ma saremmo disposti ad affermare, Hochhuth si domanda allo stesso tempo, ch'essa sia davvero sufficiente per capire un *Lager*, se non addirittura una camera a gas? Hochhuth, che scrive *Il vicario* a distanza di quasi vent'anni dall'evento-Auschwitz, ne dubita. Detto ciò, se è vero che una tale considerazione potrebbe rappresentare un'opinione tutto sommato abbastanza personale, non lo è di certo l'argomentazione, il cui fondo teorico costituisce al contrario una base comune alla gran parte degli esperimenti figurativi sui campi di sterminio. Hochhuth, nel suo testo, ne accenna soltanto i termini generali, ma il senso è tuttavia chiaro, e in modo molto sintetico potremmo riassumerlo come segue: per un Celan che non *mostra* – o che lo fa tramite metafore complicate –, occorre che altri si prendano la responsabilità di riportare l'uomo (il personaggio, l'attore) ad Auschwitz, non fosse altro che per sottrarre questo evento dallo *status* di «leggenda» o di «fiaba apocalittica».

Tramite queste prime parole, quindi, è come se Hochhuth preparasse concettualmente il lettore a ciò che di lì a poco avverrà: l'*entrata* ad Auschwitz. Dopodiché, ecco la descrizione del *décor*, che non può dunque che riflettere perfettamente questa tensione tra la necessità avvertita dal drammaturgo di avere un approccio figurativo dello sterminio e, dall'altra parte, la sua coscienza di non poter ambire al realismo:

> Ciò che accadeva all'interno di questo mondo infero, nel crematorio, non è neppure immaginabile. È quindi esclusa la possibilità di tradurre scenicamente l'atmosfera.
> Il tono della scena è comunque onirico-spettrale, e lo sarebbe anche se questa realtà potesse essere riprodotta col maggiore realismo possibile.
> Daremo qualche indicazione:
> Sul proscenio, all'estrema sinistra, il corpo di guardia, che a destra confina con un paio di aiuole meticolosamente curate e una panca. La parte posteriore della scena, sopraelevata, digrada a destra verso il retro in un dolce pendio, così che i deportati, nella loro marcia verso l'invisibile camera a gas, rimangono visibili per il maggior tempo possibile. Una rampa unisce a destra il proscenio al fondo. Il fondo rappresenta quella costruzione ad arco spesso fotografata e ancora in piedi immutata (1959), attraverso cui i treni carichi di deportati entravano ad Auschwitz: una costruzione molto simile a una stalla, estesa nel senso della lunghezza, squallida, con poche finestre e con una bassa torretta di guardia al centro, che ricorda nella forma un silos.
> Il corpo di guardia è sollevato di due gradini e aperto verso la platea. La parte posteriore è costituita da una grande finestra, ancora buia all'inizio, con davanti una macchina per scrivere, un telefono e delle sedie da ufficio. Sull'estrema sinistra, una brandina da campo, e accanto un basso tavolinetto con tazze da caffè, panini e numerose bottiglie di acquavite, che non sono mai mancate dovunque, sotto il regime dell'astemio Adolf Hitler, veniva massacrata la gente.
> L'intera scena è tipica per Auschwitz solo se lo sfondo raccapricciante, il fumo e il fuoco, la domini perennemente. Bisogna sentire che questa squallida capanna col giardinetto

> resta, pur limitatamente, una facciata ancora umana – una facciata tuttavia che, più che nascondere, mette a nudo ciò che accade dietro di essa. (Hochhuth, 1964: 326-327)

In questa descrizione, i punti in cui Hochhuth per così dire «inventa» – per riprendere la terminologia di Weiss – sono molteplici, e legittima sarebbe di conseguenza ogni eventuale critica che gli venisse mossa da un *documentarista*. I paradossi, del resto, non mancano, come testimonia in particolare quell'ammissione dell'impossibilità di «tradurre scenicamente l'atmosfera» di Auschwitz, subito dopo smentita dalla ricostruzione di parti effettive del campo. Nondimeno, al di là del giudizio sulla scenografia a partire dalla sola chiave dell'oggettività documentaristica, riteniamo comunque corretto sottolinearne altresì un elemento di profonda coerenza. In fin dei conti, cosa mostra esattamente Hochhuth? La prima cosa che il drammaturgo tiene a precisare (ai registi futuri della sua pièce), non a caso, è che la sua scenografia di Auschwitz dovrà apparire «onirico-spettrale»: più *intuibile* che reale, in un certo senso. Il concetto potrebbe risultare in un primo momento abbastanza vago; ma se non altro, a difesa di Hochhuth, esso dimostra chiaramente come il suo obiettivo iniziale non fosse tanto quello di fornire un'immagine *giusta* di Auschwitz, quanto quello di fare piuttosto leva sull'immaginazione e sulle conoscenze pregresse (su Auschwitz) da parte del pubblico. Inoltre, all'interno di questa scena, vanno ugualmente sottolineate le scelte di Hochhuth inerenti a quali *luoghi* portare in primo piano e quali, invece, nascondere. Le camere a gas, per esempio – che sono state da sempre considerate come uno dei veri banchi di prova della sfida rappresentativa –, ci sono, ma non si devono vedere, devono restare «invisibili»: già da questa indicazione, si capisce la convenzionalità della scenografia immaginata originariamente dal drammaturgo. Nello stesso modo, nel perimetro della scena teatrale non figurano né cadaveri abbandonati, né attori/*musulmani*[5]: è vero che su di essa, scrive Hochhuth, dovrebbe costantemente aleggiare il fumo dei forni crematori in azione; tuttavia, è altrettanto vero che quest'ultimi, molto distanti, dovrebbero più che altro limitarsi a costituire uno dei suoi «sfond[i]» lontani. Parallelamente, in primo piano, resta soltanto qualche luogo per così dire *limitrofo* dello sterminio: come qualche posto di guardia, qualche ufficio delle SS, nonché una loro sala da ritrovo. L'intero atto, insomma, è destinato a svolgersi all'interno di questi luoghi, che Hochhuth ha pensato di alternare in relazione alle varie sequenze da drammatizzare. Ed è sempre in uno di questi luoghi – non, quindi, in una camera a gas –, che troverà infine la morte Padre Fontana, in seguito a un colpo di pistola sparatogli dal Dottore/Mengele dopo un lungo dialogo in presenza anche di Gerstein.

Per una pièce ascritta alla forma del «Teatro documentario», è indubbio che in quest'ultimo atto di *Il vicario* vi sia qualcosa di straniante: l'approssimazione scenica è troppa e il livello di «invenzione», probabilmente, eccessivo. Tuttavia, se soltanto ci si svincola da quest'unica chiave di lettura, resta il profondo riguardo da parte di Hochhuth nei confronti della natura dell'evento da rappresentare, con tutti i rispettivi limiti e *interdits* estetici ch'esso comporta.

Nel suo modo di portare in scena il campo di Auschwitz, Hochhuth è quindi molto ambiguo: mostra e non mostra, giocando più sulla forza comunicativa dell'azione, sul dialogo, sul *logos* che verrà, piuttosto che sulla verosimiglianza scenica, sul realismo. Da un lato, infatti, la sua idea è quella di non cercare più necessariamente di creare l'illusione a partire dalla sola

[5] Il «musulmano»: nel gergo concentrazionario, s'intendeva quella spettrale figura morente di stenti e inedia, quella «silhouette senza nome» (Sofsky, 1995, 294) che segnava, parafrasando leggermente una celebre espressione di Giorgio Agamben, «la soglia mobile in cui [l'idea dell'] uomo trapassava [in quella del] non uomo» (1998: 42).

prospettiva realista, in modo tale da non «falsificare» – parola usata da Skloot – l'atmosfera di Auschwitz. Dall'altro, invece, Hochhuth scommette con grande fiducia sul principio che una buona messinscena (teatrale) dovrebbe permettere agli attori, attraverso un certo *logos* e una particolare gestualità, di creare la scenografia quasi spontaneamente: di farla immaginare, anche se assente o parziale.

In questa continua oscillazione tra il figurativo e l'*intuibile*, in altre parole, si trova il punto di compromesso finale raggiunto da Hochhuth rispetto al «dilemma» sollevato precedentemente da Skloot. Ma come trasporre tutto ciò al cinema? Immaginiamo Costa-Gavras che, dopo aver letto/visto *Il vicario*, decida di farne un film, e che si ritrovi anch'egli, di conseguenza, davanti al problema della rappresentazione di un campo di sterminio. Abbiamo evidenziato che Hochhuth, consapevole dei limiti e delle specificità dell'arte teatrale, ha trovato la soluzione in una via di compromesso, *decentrando* leggermente l'azione drammatica rispetto ai luoghi-chiave dello sterminio e, tutt'al più, tenendo quest'ultimi sullo sfondo, lontano dalla scena. Ma questo significa che una tale soluzione formale debba necessariamente valere anche per il cinema?

Da *Il vicario* a *Amen.*, passando per *La lista di Schindler* (1993) di Steven Spielberg

Come il teatro, anche il cinema ha a lungo esitato prima di lanciarsi nella rappresentazione dell'interno di un campo di sterminio. È vero che *L'ultima tappa* (1948), film passato alla storia soprattutto per la scelta della regista polacca, Wanda Jakubowska, di girare alcune scene all'interno del vero sito di Auschwitz, risale ai primi anni del dopo-guerra. Tuttavia, a parte quest'opera, la quale ha indubbiamente contribuito a lasciare una prima impronta dei campi nazisti nell'immaginario collettivo, gli anni successivi – e ciò almeno fino agli anni '80, gli anni della serie di successo americana *Holocaust* (1978) – hanno registrato un'evidente frenata della prospettiva figurativa. È ipotizzabile che la prima ragione di ciò risiedesse nel fatto che, al desiderio di mostrare (arti visive) e spiegare (letteratura, saggi, ecc.) il *Lager* e la Shoah, si contrapponesse semmai una volontà pressoché comune tra la gente di dimenticare. Dopo la guerra, in altre parole, la gente voleva voltare pagina, andare avanti, dimodoché anche il cinema, da questo punto di vista, non avrebbe fatto altro che adeguarsi[6]. Ma dall'altra parte, per trovare una seconda ragione all'esitazione di cui sopra, è utile non allontanarsi troppo dal problema etico, vale a dire relativo all'etica delle immagini – e problema, tra l'altro, su cui abbiamo già messo l'accento nel paragrafo precedente, per il teatro. Vediamo più da vicino questo secondo punto attraverso alcuni esempi concreti, giacché i margini di interpretazione, in questo campo, possono apparire a prima vista abbastanza labili.

Nei primi anni '60, a tal proposito, fece grande scalpore l'articolo «De l'abjection» (1961) di Jacques Rivette, in cui il critico francese, commentando il film *Kapò* (1960) di Gillo Pontecorvo, ed in particolare un *travelling* compiuto da quest'ultimo sul cadavere di un'attrice/deportata con il dettaglio finale della mano sul filo spinato, arrivava persino a sostenere che l'ideatore di una tale scena non avesse diritto che al più profondo «disprezzo» (55):

> Voyez cependant, dans *Kapo*, le plan où Riva se suicide, en se jetant sur les barbelés électrifiés; l'homme qui décide, à ce moment, de faire un travelling avant pour recadrer le

[6] Questo sentimento di «saturazione» trova conferma, per esempio, nelle pagine di *Déportation et génocide* (1992: 174) di Wieviorka, a cui pertanto rimandiamo.

> cadavre en contre-plongée, en prenant soin d'inscrire exactement la main levée dans un angle de son cadrage final, cet homme n'a droit qu'au plus profond mépris. (55)

Per spiegare il punto di vista di Rivette, possiamo ricorrere all'ormai famoso aforisma di Jean-Luc Godard della fine degli anni '50: «*Les travellings sont affaire de morale*» (1959: 5). Poiché un *travelling*, in altre parole, incarna sempre il massimo del formalismo e della precisione tecnica, esso non può mai dare luogo a rappresentazioni esteticamente neutre di un evento. Ora, nella scena di *Kapò*, esteticamente molto bella e realizzata in modo impeccabile, troviamo un uso «morale» della macchina da presa? La questione rimane aperta. Allo stesso tempo, sarebbe ingiusto non sottolineare che l'interpretazione di Rivette, dagli anni '60 ad oggi, è stata la più accettata e che, proprio per questo, ha segnato un precedente molto rigido per tutti quei registi che si sarebbero successivamente cimentati nell'impresa rappresentativa sui *Lager*.

Con la critica di Rivette, abbiamo evidenziato una prima rottura nell'ambito della rappresentazione: da quel momento in poi, ci sarebbe stato un prima- e un dopo-*Kapò*. Nondimeno, a testimonianza del protrarsi anche nei decenni successivi, quindi ben oltre Rivette, dell'importanza del dibattito sull'etica dell'immagine cinematografica dello sterminio, è opportuno citare l'esempio di almeno un altro film la cui ricezione da parte della critica è stata molto controversa: ci riferiamo, in particolare, a *La lista di Schindler* (1993) di Steven Spielberg, film ultra-premiato agli Oscar nel 1994. Per dare un'immagine incisiva della deportazione e del genocidio, Spielberg decise di girare la quasi totalità del film in bianco e nero: scelta anti-spettacolare per eccellenza. Tuttavia, verso la metà del film, quando l'azione si è già spostata all'interno di un campo di sterminio, ecco la scena incriminata: prima, la camera a mano del regista conduce lo spettatore all'interno di quella che sembra per molti aspetti essere una camera a gas, tra un gruppo di donne nude e terrorizzate; in seguito, dopo uno stacco improvviso che riporta l'*occhio* all'esterno della baracca, un veloce movimento di macchina si avvicina ad uno spioncino, permettendo così agli spettatori di continuare a vedervi all'interno[7]. Prima di Spielberg, mai nessun regista aveva osato tanto. La scena – che abbiamo scelto di menzionare anche perché il motivo dello spioncino sarà ugualmente centrale nel film di Costa-Gavras – è di un voyeurismo francamente insopportabile. Sorprende che Spielberg, uno dei registi più conosciuti al mondo, possa aver ignorato a tal punto i grandi interrogativi etici che, in materia di Auschwitz e degli altri *Lager*, hanno invece afflitto tanti altri colleghi – perlomeno dopo *Kapò*. Detto ciò, non si può certo dire che la scena sia passata indenne, come dimostra il fatto che lo stesso Godard, in una lettera del 1995, abbia scritto provocatoriamente di aver fallito nella sua missione di intellettuale poiché non è stato capace, tra le altre cose, di «empêcher Spielberg de reconstruire Auschwitz» (1998: 344).

Non fosse altro che per questa affermazione di Godard, che va letta sulla scia di quella precedente di Rivette sul film *Kapò* di Pontecorvo, già si capisce quanto fosse diversa l'eredità raccolta a inizio millennio da Costa-Gavras rispetto a quella di Hochhuth, sebbene a teatro,

[7] La scena, di fatto, è abbastanza ambigua, e, in merito proprio alla natura esatta della baracca, si è prestata nel corso degli anni a varie interpretazioni. Studi recenti, come quello di Ettore Albergoni (2022), sembrano ancora identificare la baracca come un'effettiva camera a gas. In realtà, il fatto che all'interno della baracca, e in particolare dal suo soffitto, scenda dell'acqua – con cui le deportate si lavano –, lascerebbe pensare ad altro: per esempio, ad una sala docce, che era del resto una tappa obbligatoria per i deportati appena scesi dai convogli. Quel che è certo, ad ogni modo, è che Spielberg abbia giocato molto su questa ambiguità, conscio che per un pubblico meno avveduto quella baracca sarebbe facilmente stata percepita come una camera a gas.

circa una quarantina di anni prima. Quando quest'ultimo scrisse *Il vicario* per la scena teatrale, di fatto, di grandi precedenti con cui confrontarsi, o da cui prendere le distanze, ancora non ce n'erano: con quel quinto atto del suo dramma ambientato ad Auschwitz, in un certo senso, è come se un nuovo genere teatrale si stesse inaugurando. Al contrario, all'inizio del millennio, la narrazione dominante è completamente diversa. Non che la tesi figurativa, nel frattempo, fosse scomparsa: tutt'altro, come testimonia il grande successo di un film come *La lista di Schindler*, al cui filone vanno altresì inglobati film di poco successivi come *La vita è bella* (1997) e *La tregua* (1997). Soltanto, a fianco di questi film, è altrettanto vero che iniziò ad assumere sempre più credito intellettuale anche la tesi aniconica, la quale vide per esempio in *Shoah* (1985), il film-documentario di Claude Lanzmann che si limitava a *mostrare* la Shoah attraverso le sole testimonianze dei sopravvissuti all'evento, uno dei suoi modelli di riferimento principali. A tal proposito, in questo articolo scritto dallo stesso Lanzmann otto anni dopo l'uscita del suo film, si noti la radicalità del suo pensiero iconoclasta – nemmeno più soltanto aniconico –, nonché l'enorme lontananza rispetto alle posizioni assunte tre decenni prima da Hochhuth:

> Il n'y a pas une seconde d'archive dans *Shoah*, parce que ce n'est pas ma façon de travailler, de penser, et aussi parce qu'il n'en existe pas. La question est ainsi posée: pour témoigner, est-ce qu'on invente une forme nouvelle ou est-ce qu'on reconstruit? Je pense avoir fait une forme nouvelle. Spielberg a choisi di reconstruire. Or, reconstruire, c'est d'une certaine façon fabriquer des archives. Et si j'avais trouvé un film existant – un film secret parce que c'était strictement interdit – tourné par un SS montrant comment 3000 Juifs, hommes, femmes, enfants, mouraient ensemble, asphyxiés dans une chambre à gaz du crématoire 2 d'Auschwitz, si j'avais trouvé cela, non seulement je ne l'aurait pas montré, mais je l'aurais détruit. Je ne suis pas capable de dire pourquoi. Ça va de soi. (1993: 7)

Si può essere d'accordo o meno con quest'affermazione di Lanzmann: personalmente, Costa-Gavras non lo era – «Il est d'autant plus nécessaire [après *Shoah*] de continuer à travailler sur le sujet que l'on continue à découvrir de nouvelles choses» (Alion, 2005: 20) –, benché riconoscesse in *Shoah* un capolavoro, un'opera «hors du commun» (20). Ad ogni modo, se non altro da un punto di vista filosofico, essa incarna perfettamente uno degli spiriti dominanti del tempo, e quindi, presa nella sua radicalità, un precedente/monito contro cui qualsiasi regista della Shoah, da quel momento in poi, sarebbe dovuto passare e confrontarsi.

Alla luce della ricostruzione del contesto in cui Costa-Gavras, nel 2002, doveva essersi ritrovato ad operare, come agire, dunque, rispetto a quest'ultimo atto di *Il vicario*? Avere un atteggiamento aniconico/iconoclasta (Lanzmann), oppure ancora figurativo (Pontecorvo, Spielberg)? Da un lato, per Costa-Gavras, il vantaggio di poter ripartire da un testo come quello di Hochhuth, il quale non arrivava mai fino al punto di drammatizzare scene di violenza o di morte estreme, non era di poco conto. In un'intervista rilasciata a margine dell'uscita del suo film, lo stesso regista ha del resto ammesso:

> Je pense également que toute fiction qui essaye de reconstruire l'horreur est impossible à mener jusqu'au bout. On ne peut pas embaucher des figurants pour les faire jouer aux juifs qui vont être gazés. À la limite quand on les voit descendre du train, parce qu'ils sont encore dans une situation humaine. Mais ce qui se passe après est difficilement montrable… (Alion, 2005: 20)

A cui vanno aggiunte le riserve dello stesso regista relative proprio alla scena dello spioncino presente nel film di Spielberg:

> C'est un bon film. Mais il y a une faute de goût inexcusable, c'est la fameuse scène des douches. Spielberg s'en est expliqué et je pense que probablement il arrivait que de l'eau sorte des douches. Mais le symbole est trop lourd et le suspense que crée la situation est pour le moins déplacé. (24-25)

Dall'altro lato, ciò non toglie nulla alla complessità della sfida, che era di gran lunga più proibitiva rispetto a quella dello stesso Hochhuth. Infatti, se quest'ultimo poteva ancora limitarsi, da drammaturgo, a descrivere l'atmosfera di un campo di sterminio attraverso delle semplici indicazioni di regia, Costa-Gavras doveva invece andare oltre, sintetizzando il tutto in immagini già concrete.

Ora, se provassimo a stabilire un confronto diretto tra l'ultimo atto della pièce di Hochhuth e la sua trasposizione cinematografica in *Amen.*, ci sarebbe in realtà gran poco da dire, e anzi, dopo tutta la suspense che abbiamo creata per l'arrivo di questa scena nel film, un certo grado di delusione sarebbe anche comprensibile. All'audacia della prima inquadratura dall'interno di Auschwitz, in cui vengono mostrati i deportati (tra i quali Fontana) scendere dal treno dopo quattro giorni di viaggio, segue infatti il *décor* fisso di un refettorio/mensa delle SS, che è una stanza molto grande e vuota, e dalle cui finestre non si scorge nulla della realtà circostante. Una breve inquadratura, verso metà della sequenza, smentisce questa neutralità scenica: la macchina da presa si posiziona alle spalle di Gerstein, nel frattempo appoggiatosi ad una finestra, e al di là, sebbene in lontananza, vengono inquadrati due forni crematori in pieno funzionamento, con due colonne di fumo grigio. Per il resto, di Auschwitz non si vede altro. Non c'è un vero e proprio «sfondo» – diversamente da quanto per esempio previsto da Hochhuth nel suo testo – che ricordi costantemente allo spettatore che l'azione si sta svolgendo in un campo di sterminio. Inoltre, un discorso più o meno simile vale anche per lo stesso refettorio/mensa, il quale, grigio e spoglio di qualsiasi simbolo nazista, pare un luogo sì terminale, ma senza una sua geografia propria.

Questa sequenza filmica di Costa-Gavras si colloca a metà strada tra il figurativo e l'aniconico, lasciando così l'impressione che l'*interdit* di Lanzmann, anche solo inconsciamente, abbia giocato un ruolo di prim'ordine nel lavoro del regista greco. Tuttavia, Costa-Gavras non si arresta qui, poiché il vero punto di rottura della sua opera rispetto a quella di Hochhuth sta nella decisione di non *entrare* nel campo di sterminio soltanto in un'occasione, bensì a due riprese: alla fine del film, come appena illustrato, ma anche all'inizio, attraverso una sequenza della durata di non più di quattro minuti. Osserviamo più da vicino questa scena iniziale, la quale, per quanto riguarda il dibattito generale sulla questione della rappresentazione artistica della Shoah, ha reso *Amen.* un classico, subito dopo film come *Shoah* o *La lista di Schindler*.

Abbiamo già visto nel paragrafo precedente che la pièce di Hochhuth si apriva a Berlino, nella dimora del Nunzio Apostolico. In quell'occasione, Gerstein era già stato nel campo di sterminio di Belzec: aveva già «visto», in altre parole. Il che significava altresì che lo spettatore/lettore, esattamente come il Nunzio, non potesse «v[edere]» se non attraverso le stesse parole dell'SS: occorreva credere a quest'ultimo, dargli fiducia, dal momento che la sua narrazione, fino a quel momento, era la sola prova dell'esistenza delle camere a gas. Al contrario, quando il film di Costa-Gavras comincia, ci troviamo temporalmente in una fase in

cui Gerstein ancora non *sa*, in cui non ha ancora visitato Belzec. Di lì a poco scoprirà tutto sulle camere a gas, dimodoché, anche nel film, ritroveremo presto questo personaggio a dialogo con il Nunzio, a Berlino. Detto ciò, già da questa prima differenza tra la pièce e il film, si evince chiaramente l'intenzione da parte di Costa-Gavras, rispetto ad Hochhuth, di mostrare molto più da vicino il «percorso morale» (Alion, 2005: 5) di Gerstein – conclusosi, per l'appunto, con la visita del campo di Belzec.

È qui, benché già ad inizio film, che arriviamo dunque alla scena-chiave di *Amen.* – chiave, s'intende, ai fini del nostro dibattito sull'etica delle immagini. Costa-Gavras, insomma, si è posto l'obiettivo di seguire Gerstein nella sua visita a Belzec, là dove «v[edrà]» – e dove anche noi spettatori, di conseguenza, dovremmo farlo con lui, al suo fianco. Allo stesso tempo, però, poiché è pienamente cosciente di non poter «reconstruire l'horreur […] jusqu'au bout» (Alion, 2005: 20), vale a dire in modo realistico, lo stesso regista sa altrettanto bene di non potersi esimere dall'utilizzo di qualche escamotage o di qualche artificio scenico. Come comportarsi, allora? Nella durata della sequenza di Gerstein a Belzec, che non oltrepassa i tre minuti e mezzo in tutto, troviamo già una prima indicazione essenziale: questi tre minuti e mezzo, in sintesi, ci fanno capire che lo *sguardo* sul campo polacco da parte di Costa-Gavras sarà rapido, minimo, ma mai panoramico, né tantomeno minuzioso. Stabilito ciò, e seguendo invece più specificamente i movimenti di Gerstein all'interno del campo – dal suo attraversamento a bordo di una vettura delle SS, fino all'arrivo dinanzi ad una camera a gas –, i motivi estetici sui quali è fondamentale rivolgere la nostra attenzione sono almeno due.

Innanzitutto, va sottolineato che, per tutta la sequenza con Gerstein in vettura, quel che Costa-Gavras ritrae del campo di Belzec viene mostrato attraverso inquadrature che hanno la caratteristica di essere sempre: 1) In movimento; 2) Condotte dall'interno della stessa vettura. Di piani fissi, quindi, non ce ne sono. Inoltre, poiché tutte le inquadrature vengono fatte da una camera da presa situata tra i sedili posteriori della vettura – a fianco, se non addirittura nella stessa posizione occupata da Gerstein –, la profondità di campo di ognuna di esse è estremamente limitata. Il risultato, di conseguenza, è che si vede poco e, soprattutto, che si vede male, tanto più che il parabrezza della vettura è per metà innevato. Nell'ordine, si scorge: qualche bambino che corre, ma di schiena rispetto alla camera; due posti di guardia; la sagoma, lontana, di parte di una torre, che potrebbe sembrare tanto quella di un forno crematorio che di una fabbrica; un cancello presieduto da una SS; infine, la facciata di una baracca, che poco dopo si rivelerà essere quella di una camera a gas. Indubbiamente, la curiosità (per ciò che c'è oltre la vettura) e il disorientamento (per la rapidità delle immagini che passano) sono le due impressioni che prevalgono – entrambe tra l'altro attestate in modo perfetto da Costa-Gavras attraverso due primi piani su Gerstein che lo colgono con gli occhi sgranati, guardare alla sua destra, nel tentativo di avere una visuale migliore. Ma c'è di più: infatti, in termini di funzione narrativa, questo modo di inquadrare Belzec da una vettura in movimento crea attesa (nello spettatore), aumenta la suspense e la tensione drammatica, a mano a mano che Gerstein si sta avvicinando sempre più al cuore del campo.

Gerstein, quindi, giunge infine davanti a quella che presto scoprirà essere una camera a gas. Il portone della baracca è grigio, neutro: Gerstein, incuriosito, vi si avvicina. Stacco: dal tetto della baracca, un soldato SS lascia inavvertitamente cadere un barattolo vuoto di Zyklon B, il quale finisce la sua caduta proprio davanti a Gerstein. Questi inizia a sospettare: noi spettatori, invece, abbiamo già capito. Ma perché il sospetto di Gerstein sia fondato, occorre che egli «v[eda]» tutto, fino in fondo. Come? Attraverso lo spioncino, il quale, isolato e ben visibile sulla

porta della baracca, sembra quasi avere la funzione di un «oggetto magico»[8], per soddisfare la curiosità del personaggio[9]. Per uno spettatore minimamente avvertito, la situazione creata da Costa-Gavras non può che richiamare la scena dello spioncino di *La lista di Schindler*. Tuttavia, contrariamente al movimento della macchina da presa di Spielberg sulla lente dello spioncino, il regista greco è molto più pudico, nel senso che, allontanando il suo *occhio* dall'«oggetto magico», lascia che a guardarvi attraverso siano soltanto Gerstein e i suoi accompagnatori. La macchina da presa, posizionata così di profilo rispetto a Gerstein e ai suoi colleghi, li riprende tutti, uno dopo l'altro, tramite dei primi piani molto stretti sui loro volti: l'espressione di smarrimento e di paura di Gerstein mentre «v[ede]», anche solo per pochi secondi, contrasta qui con l'interesse sadico, tra l'affascinato e lo scrupoloso, delle altre SS. Parallelamente, benché non «v[eda]» direttamente attraverso lo spioncino, se anche lo spettatore giunge nondimeno a *sapere*, è perché, a partire dal momento in cui l'SS sul tetto ha rilasciato lo Zyklon B nella baracca, il portone ha cominciato senza sosta a tremare. Esso trema, evidentemente, per via dei deportati, i quali, intrappolati come bestie nella baracca, cercano una via d'uscita con tutte le loro ultime forze. Lo spettatore non li «v[ede]», e Costa-Gavras, così facendo, è ben conscio di deludere la curiosità dello spettatore. Ad ogni modo, metodologicamente, se Costa-Gavras si risolve ad adottare una simile posizione anti-feticista, è perché confida sul fatto che la sola immaginazione di un qualsiasi spettatore contemporaneo, combinando il motivo del portone tremante e dello Zyklon B, sarebbe riuscita a *riempire* questa scena in un modo molto più veritiero che se quest'ultima fosse stata recitata da attori.

Commentando il film di Costa-Gavras, e in particolare questa sequenza dello spioncino, Magali Chiappone-Lucchesi scrive:

> Il y a cette impression déconcertante, au sortir du film, d'avoir vu l'image des corps décharnés – l'image nodale de la représentation de la Shoah – alors que le film ne la montrait pas. On a vu sans avoir vu. On a associé nos images inconscientes à l'endroit même où il y a impossibilité de représentation. La reconstitution de nos topiques en images filmées appelle chez nous, spectateurs, le spectre des images d'archive. […] Ce que voit Gerstein à travers l'œilleton de la chambre à gaz ne pourra être éternellement et nécessairement que du hors champ. (2013: 101)

Concettualmente, non siamo per nulla lontani da Hochhuth, nel senso che anche il drammaturgo chiedeva allo spettatore di compensare tramite la sua immaginazione alcune scene concentrazionarie, come per esempio quella della camera a gas, che anche nella pièce restava infatti *fuori campo*. Il che ci deve di conseguenza portare a concludere che è come se i due autori, accomunati dalla premessa dell'etica dello sguardo, concordassero nel collocare lo sterminio al di là del rappresentabile, finanche a riconoscere l'inadeguatezza del mezzo artistico in quanto tale (teatro e cinema) nella pretesa di replicare fedelmente l'evento storico contemporaneo.

[8] Si tratta di una terminologia, evidentemente, che riprendiamo dagli studi di Vladimir Propp sulla morfologia e sul funzionamento delle fiabe. Cfr., in tal senso, il suo celebre saggio *Morfologia della fiaba*, pubblicato per la prima volta nel 1928.

[9] Per completezza d'informazione, precisiamo che gli spioncini sul portone della camera a gas, nel film di Costa-Gavras, sono in realtà due, e non, quindi, uno solo.

La struttura a chiasmo, con il campo di sterminio che, in *Amen*., appare tanto all'inizio (Belzec) che alla fine del film (Auschwitz), è un dettaglio significativo, da cui si può altresì capire per quale ragione Costa-Gavras, rispetto ad Hochhuth, abbia potuto restringere il *décor* della scena di Auschwitz al solo refettorio/mensa: è perché aveva già mostrato l'interno di un campo precedentemente (Belzec), detto in sintesi, che non aveva più bisogno di farlo dopo (Auschwitz). A cui si deve almeno aggiungere anche un'altra considerazione, questa volta di ordine più narrativo: ovvero, che l'opzione di mostrare l'essenziale di un campo di sterminio fin dalle prime battute del film avrebbe in seguito consentito al regista greco di focalizzare più facilmente il *climax* della scena finale ad Auschwitz attorno al contenuto dello scambio dialogico tra i personaggi, e meno sulla presentazione del luogo, dell'ambientazione. Nondimeno, al di là di quest'ultima riflessione inerente alla disposizione delle sequenze del film, è fondamentale ripetere ancora una volta, in conclusione, che lo stesso Costa-Gavras, volendo mostrare il campo di sterminio, è giunto malgrado tutto ad un'ipotesi molto simile a quella di Hochhuth, oscillante tra la tentazione figurativa e la consapevolezza di non poterla mai abbracciare completamente.

Che soltanto in quest'oscillazione appena descritta, in merito allo sterminio, possa trovarsi *il* criterio rappresentativo? È un'interpretazione possibile. Allo stesso tempo, dal confronto tra *Il vicario* e *Amen*., vale a dire tra un'opera teatrale e una cinematografica, risulta evidente che nessuna di queste due forme artistiche, in materia di Shoah e dei campi di sterminio, possa davvero considerarsi più adeguata rispetto all'altra. Hochhuth dopo Celan, e Costa-Gavras, a sua volta, dopo Hochhuth e Spielberg: se non altro, in questo principio di trasversalità generazionale, dove nuovi autori ripartono ogni volta da opere precedenti, per completarle (Hochhuth dopo Celan), per criticarle (Costa-Gavras dopo Spielberg), oppure per riscriverle/riadattarle (Costa-Gavras dopo Hochhuth), si evince tutta la complessità di un dibattito, quello sì, inesauribile.

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Negotiating an Approach to Trauma: where Visual Media and Literature Diverge

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This article aims to uncover and assess some of the most prominent techniques used in the contemporary portrayal of trauma, by analyzing the works of Hanya Yanagihara, Koen Tachelet and Ivo van Hove for the novel *A Little Life* and its stage adaptation. This case study is particularly complex thanks to the stage adaptation being itself adapted in turn, for streaming platform distribution. The paper shows each medium's own strengths when it comes to the challenge of accurately portraying the broken psyche of a traumatized individual, as well as highlighting where and how the adaptation is forced to diverge formally from its literary counterpart, in order to create a powerful depiction of the same subject. Close reading is used in order to wholly assess each of the works, both individually, and comparatively. Finally, the article highlights how both visual media and written media can create impactful representations of trauma, so long as each form acknowledges and maximizes its own strengths and makes full use of its range of technical possibilities, adapting the visual where it cannot fully replicate the original text.

Keywords

trauma studies; trauma novel; adaptation studies; contemporary-literature; literary devices; visual devices.

In Linda Hutcheon's words, adapting a work means "transcoding into a different set of conventions" (2006: 33). Starting from this point of view, this paper seeks to analyze the processes utilized in transcoding Hanya Yanagihara's 2015 novel *A Little Life* into the 2018 Dutch play *Een Klein Leven*, adapted by Koen Tachelet and directed by Ivo van Hove. The aim is to uncover and asses the different ways of portraying trauma when using different mediums, ranging from writing to performance and filming, and all the tools utilized with each form. As the play has been made accessible to the broader audience by means of an officially filmed and streamed version distributed by ITALive, it thus presents itself as a more complex case study, wherein the aforementioned transcoding happens twice, since it first must be turned from novel to stage play, and then also from stage play to the filmed version for streaming, which follows the usual conventions of filmmaking (camera work, editing etc.).

Julie Sanders explains that "any exploration of intertextuality and its specific manifestation in the forms of adaptation and appropriation is inevitably interested in how art creates art, or how literature is made by literature" (2015: 1). This is particularly relevant in the case of novels which undergo the adaptation processes necessary for becoming stage plays, as this process begins first and foremost by going from one form of written work to another, in order to produce the screenplay. As John Perry explains, "all literature deals with the communication of words. However, the narrative and dramatic forms differ essentially in the use of language" (1968: 1313), not to mention that "playwriting demands an economy of expression" (1313). The screenplay is always written with the intention of being read aloud, that is, performed. This means, of course, that the adapter cannot use the same techniques available to the author, and must therefore become creative when it comes to rendering parts of the work, so as not to lose certain aspects

that cannot be directly expressed in the spoken form.

When performing the screenplay, the actors add their own contributions to the finite product, among which one can count the tone, gestures, movements, body language, expressions and so on, which, as highlighted by Hutcheon, are not included in the actual text of the script (2006: 39). This means, therefore, that the actors themselves add another new layer of creativity, helping to shape the skeleton which is the screenplay. Then follows the contribution of the cameramen for the streaming of the play, alongside the editing and executive decisions regarding what and how to show, and maybe even more importantly what *not* to show. It thus becomes clear that the transformation that the original suffers in order to be adapted is manifold, and it happens at almost every level of creation, ranging from narration, to acting, to filming and producing.

The theme of Yanagihara and van Hove's works is trauma. Cathy Caruth suggests that the reason why trauma has become such an ever-present topic of discussion is because "it brings us to the limits of our understanding" (1995: 4). It stands then to reason that traumatic experiences so obscure that they defy a simple understanding would naturally call for a plethora of literary artifices in order to comprise a vivid representation of these things which are unspeakable in words. For this reason, symbolism becomes the main technique for the authors of trauma novels (Granofsky, 1995: 5). As one of the leading contemporary trauma authors, Yanagihara also utilizes a multitude of these narrative artifices and techniques in order to portray the broken psyche of the novel's protagonist, Jude, counting among those not only symbolism, but also disjointed timelines which go back and forth from past to present, allegory, and flashbacks reminiscent of PTSD symptoms, where something in the prose will trigger the protagonist and launch an episode from his past, presented to the reader as if Jude himself was reliving it in his mind, but more than anything, in his body. These are literary depictions of what Caruth terms as the belatedness of trauma, "its refusal to be simply located, its insistent appearance outside the boundaries of any single place or time" (1995: 9).

As Perry explains, devices such as imagery and symbolism do not contribute to the work of the playwright, whose only tools are dialogue and movement (1968: 1313). Therefore, all of these techniques which represent strengths and innovations for the novel, actually make the adaptation process become more challenging, as the techniques available to primarily visual media differ vastly from those of media intended to be read.

Hutcheon states that "a novel, in order to be dramatized, has to be distilled, reduced in size, and thus, inevitably, complexity" (2006: 36). Yet the complexity can be compensated through the use of media and mode specific outlets, which are not available in the writing of a novel. Instances of these are the gestures and performances of the actors, the score, the lighting, or, in the case of films, the editing itself. Elsewhere Hutcheon highlights that "film clearly has resources that the stage can never have: the power of the close-up that gives the 'microdrama of the human countenance' and the separate soundtracks of film that permit voice-overs, music, and the nonvocal to intermingle" (2004: 110). As stated previously, van Hove's streamed adaptation is unique, as it combines the conventions of the play with those of the film, which allows, in theory, for the maximization of all medium specific strengths, in order to create the most complex finite product, since, as Hutcheon points out, the cinematic film has some advantages where the stage represents a constriction, "with the aid of the mediating camera, [that] can both direct and expand the possibilities of perception." (2006: 43).

It is with these medium specific outlets that the play manages to evoke and reconstruct in its own way the pervasiveness of trauma, as well as some of its symptoms, without using the

same artifices as the novel does, but creating its own way of defying genre in order to accurately portray the experience of trauma. In the first scene, where Jude harms himself, the others are seen around the scene doing their own tasks, unaware or blissfully oblivious of Jude, suggesting that they are in fact elsewhere, that the daily life continues uninterrupted in spite of the ongoing struggles of the protagonist. At the same time, Harrold is delivering a monologue about how he first met Jude, offering the spectator more insight into Jude's past, through Harrold's perception of the situation (van Hove, 2018: 19:40:00 – 22:00:00). Another instance happens at the 00:26:19 minute mark, when Jude is singing to Harrold, and as he sings the viewer can see Brother Luke's figure slowly creeping in from the background, as if suggestive of it emerging from Jude's depths of mind, like the trigger of a flashback. And yet another way of depicting the traumatic flashback is at the half hour mark, where the cameras effectively show a "dance" between the past and the present, as Jude talks to Harrold, but the conversation is interrupted by past conversations with Brother Luke. This particular scene sees the cameras switching aggressively from one side of the scene, Harrold's side, to Luke's side on the opposite end, with Jude stuck straight in the middle.

A more direct approach can be seen in the case of the "hyenas", one of the most prominent symbols used in the novel, where Jude frequently mentions them when his struggles and symptoms worsen, as a way of referring to the idea of a trigger for lack of knowledge of what he is experiencing. At the 2 hour and 40 minutes mark, Ana narrates "then come the hyenas", which is followed quickly by Jude's monologue where he describes the hyenas which have multiplied since he started having sex with Willem, launching into a full description of how they circle him in the savanna, suggesting that the savanna would be Jude's mind, while the camera circles him and shows him as if lurking around Jude, imitating the hyenas. The soundtrack is cleverly used to add actual hyena howls, which grow in intensity as the scene goes on, intensifying the tension, and only stop once Jude caves in despite attempts at resisting, and commits the act of self-harm by burning himself (van Hove, 2018: 2:40:00 – 2:42:33).

Sanders explains that adaptation involves an interpretative act, as the text is moved either generically or modally (or both) (2015: 3), which can be seen when comparing the original with the adaptation, when the differences become clear and can be traced back to interpretations pertaining as to what was considered by the adapters to be indispensable in telling the story and what was not. In certain cases, as she explains, this manifests as a revision of the original point of view, by voicing what the original silences (Sanders, 2015: 23). One striking example of this is seen in van Hove's play in the case of Ana's character. In Yanagihara's text, Ana is an episodic character who only appears in a few of the explanatory flashback chapters which depict Jude's childhood and his brief interactions with her as his social worker. This is because at the present time of the story Ana is dead, and can therefore only appear through these flashbacks which are meant to show the reader that there was at some point someone who did try to teach Jude how to overcome his trauma. It is then left to the reader's interpretation to decide how impactful her character was in the psychological development of the protagonist. The play, however, chooses to emphasize Ana's importance in Jude's journey, by having her almost constantly appear on stage as a figment of Jude's imagination in the battle between his instinct of locking his trauma away, that is, repressing it, and Ana's urging him to open up and allow himself to be seen and heard by those closest around him, his support system. This is used to show how echoes of the past reverberate in the traumatized individual's psyche even in the present, showing the tremendous impact of one singular instance of positive reinforcement. She is there, however, even when Jude is not implied to be thinking about her;

she is a constant presence watching him, only visible to the audience, as Jude goes through his journey and makes tentative steps towards recovery (van Hove, 2018: 2:05:00; 2:18:30). And, moreover, she is elevated not only to the rank of symbol, but also that of narrator, as she fills in the audience with information about events which are skipped in the performance (van Hove, 2018: 2:50:00), including ones of utmost importance for the plot and story, such as the description of Jude's suicide (van Hove, 2018: 3:38:28 – 3:41:00).

Marie-Laure Ryan affirms that "if we accept the possibility of narrativity in drama (…) the presence of a narrator is no longer a necessary condition" (1992: 368), yet van Hove's play makes constant use of the narrator, not only through the character of Ana, who although serves as the main narrator, as stated above, but who is also at times supplemented through other characters, such as Harold (2018: 3:41:00) or Willem (2018: 3:25:00). One explanation for this might be the novel's very large length of over 830 pages, which cannot wholly be replicated on the stage (or screen), even considering the play's exceptionally long runtime of over four hours. Therefore, the classical instrument of a narrator becomes an indispensable tool in the act of storytelling. Yet another reason for this could be to have a more well-rounded approach on how Jude is seen by his friends, how his trauma affects the lives of those around him, which is an important aspect and theme of the original text of the novel.

It is also important to highlight the scenes where the narrator is used, as stated above. The most relevant instances are Jude's suicide and Willem's death in the car crash, whose logistics were more likely than not difficult to represent on stage because of their nature. This is especially true in the case of the car crash scene which is brutal and much too dynamic to be properly replicated within the constraints of the stage: "At a large intersection, I don't see the truck coming at us. By the time I feel the crunch, I am already being ejected into the air." (Willem narrating his death, van Hove, 2018: 2:35:11 – 2:35:40).

However, in Ryan's use of narrativity the concept is not limited to the narrator. She explains that the narrative text must create a world populated with characters, who must undergo changes of state caused by physical events, and, finally, the text must permit a coherent network which retraces events, links, and casual reactions (1992: 371). Following this description, wherein the "text" becomes the play performed, one can then asses in which of Ryan's classifications the work belongs. In the case of the original text of the novel, the assessment is clear and straightforward – complex narrativity:

> In the complex mode, narrative structures appear on both the macro and the micro levels, and a relative balance is achieved between the two levels. The micro narratives do not create their own semantic universe, but expand the universe of the main plot. They may consist of background information on newly introduced characters, of subplots involving secondary characters, of anecdotes demonstrating the personality traits of the main character, or of relatively self-contained episodes bearing a crucial influence on their mental development. (Ryan, 1992: 372-3)

At other times the novel also falls into the scope of the proliferating narrativity, which is different from the complex one in the sense that the balance of the micro to macro levels is not maintained, with the micro level becoming invasive and monopolizing (Ryan, 1992: 373-4). Examples of this include episodes about Malcom's and JB's personal lives, particularly during JB's brief departure from the group. In van Hove's adaptation, however, the micro levels are almost entirely wiped from the story. Julia does not only not make an appearance, but she is

not even so much as mentioned by name, making it appear as if she does not exist at all. The only information that the audience receives about Malcom is very brief and happens in the first scene, when he speaks about his identity, resuming what was an entire character arc in the novel to a few lines which serve rather as an introduction in the play. JB's story is the most explored one, but in the larger context of the play that is still a minimal amount of exploration, with the episode of the gallery argument between JB and Jude being almost entirely glossed over, as opposed to its ample novelistic depiction.

The scene where JB mocks Jude's walk is also minimally explored on stage, which makes it lack the force it originally had in the novel, where its importance and effects reverberate more clearly and causally throughout the story, as it marks a moment of deep betrayal for Jude, which leads him further in his self-hatred, as he uses it as a way to confirm his worst fears: that even his friends see him just as badly as he sees himself. This episode leads him to more easily accept Caleb's behavior mere pages further, creating a clear cause and effect link between JB's betrayal and Jude's lapse into an abusive situation, and highlighting the importance of a support system (or what is perceived as a lack thereof) in overcoming trauma. In the play, however, despite it following the same chain of events, with the mocking preceding Caleb's arc, in lack of the mental commentary from Jude, the scene does not read as markedly as in the novel, and JB's remorse is barely shown at all. The examples listed above are not the only instances of cut narratives. Jude's accomplishments in college and career are not highlighted, and, overall, what would be considered the mundane and daily living of the characters, comprising the happy aspects of the story, are not included.

The point of highlighting these differences is not to assess the fidelity of the play to the novel it adapts, but rather to use Ryan's classification in order to show and better understand what kind of story the play chooses to tell. As she herself states, "rather than limiting its scrutiny to those parts of the text which explicitly represent the story, the study of narrativity assesses the role of the story with respect to the whole of the text, taking both narrative and non-narrative elements into consideration." (Ryan, 1992: 369). The difference, therefore, is that although both of the works deal with trauma and life, the novel also includes what makes it bearable, the happy moments and Jude's accomplishment in spite of all the traumatic experiences. It is a different framing of a story with the same ending.

For some of the avid readers of the novel, however, this departure from the original text was considered significant, and, moreover, was viewed particularly negatively, rather as a flaw of the adaptation, not a mere difference. This leads to the play garnering intense criticism that it is "too much" (Shaw, 2022, s. p.) or "just trauma porn" (Akbar, 2023, s. p.), due to focusing solely on the traumatic aspects of the protagonists' life and cutting out the rest. This was also a particularly interesting phenomenon in the reception of this adaptation, since, as Hutcheon points out "if an adaptation is perceived as 'lowering' a story (according to some imaginary hierarchy of medium or genre), response is likely to be negative" (2006: 3), a statement which was generally proven to be true, but which also works in the reverse. Seeing as theater is usually considered the higher brow art form, the natural expectation would be that the play would be considered a kind of upgrade to the original story, not a lowering of it, as some criticism has suggested.

When making use of the modes of narrativity, Ryan highlights that it is important "to ask whether they allow a full realization of narrativity or imply a deficient manifestation. By full realization I mean two properties: the text must allow the reconstruction of a complete narrative structure and this structure must be suggested by a narratorial speech act" (1992:

384). Van Hove's play does allow for the reconstruction, it does tell a full story on its own, and it includes what would reasonably be considered the key points. But the difference is an interpretative one, one of social commentary about the subject depicted. The novel suggests that there can be happiness and achievement even through all the catastrophic difficulties it presents, while the play essentially ignores this aspect. The ending is the same in both cases: Jude's suicide. However, the framing is different, and the journey to the endpoint is different, which leads the audience to different understandings or empathic reactions. The achievements are also of unique importance in Jude's case, as his character is disabled, and ignoring his capabilities and the whole of his journey makes for a truncated depiction, which implies what could be considered some serious social commentary issues. The novel, on the other hand, highlights the fact that Jude's only self-worth derives from these professional and academic achievements, and both the play and the novel do a good job in showing Jude's own disdain about himself in the numerous times when he calls himself a "cripple", but the play, lacking Jude's internal monologue, does not manage to show as evidently how this self-hatred fuels some of his more destructive tendencies and deters him from engaging romantically with Willem sooner. The viewer is only suggested this notion well over the half mark of the play, when, during an argument, Jude yells out "I'm not going to be the cripple you get to save" (van Hove, 2018: 2:47:18), implying that Jude has always believed that Willem's only reasoning for being with him was some form of charity or savior complex. Yet this interpretation is more understandable earlier in the novel, simply by reading between the lines of Jude's internal convictions.

Both of the examples mentioned above suggest that what the play seems to lack is a cohesive cause and effect depiction. The novel, with its vast dwelling on Jude's internal world, allows the reader an easier reconstruction of the causal links between thoughts, traumas, actions and events. The play, although following the same structures largely, seems to lose some of this ease of reconstruction, because it cannot show the world through Jude's eyes as easily as the omniscient narrator does, and having him narrate these things in his monologues would imply that he has an own understanding of his thoughts, rather than receiving this information by means of the omniscient narrator, which would have portrayed an entirely different psychological battle. Hutcheon mentions that "attempts to use the camera for first-person narration – to let the spectator see only what the protagonist sees – are infrequent" (2006: 54), likely because of scenic constrains and difficulty of portraying this intention. But this is supplemented sometimes through the camera work by means of close ups of the protagonist's face and facial acting. Theater, of course, lacks this possibility, but the streamed version, with its means of editing and camerawork, supplements it. One clear example of this takes place at 2:30:00 hour mark, during Jude and Willem's intimate moments, where a narrator would break the spell of the play, but a wide-angle depiction would fail to accurately portray Jude's distress.

As for the limitations of the stage, of which Hutcheon also warns (2006: 42), van Hove's play makes clever use of technological advancements by using screens to project different scenes in the background. For instance, during the abuse scene where Caleb throws Jude into the street, the screens are showing images of the streets of New York and the sound of cars and horns are overlayed on top of the actors' speech (van Hove, 2018: 1:37:34 – 1:38:03). This is tied in with the camerawork, which uses frantic motions, suggestive of Jude's attempts to dodge the moving vehicles. This is one instance of what Hutcheon terms movement from

showing to showing (2006: 43), where the camerawork also adds complexity to the scene, which is not there for the audience watching the play in the theater.

In terms of actors' work, there is added symbolism in the play, as Hans Kesting plays all three of the antagonists, suggesting that the face of the abuser is not important, that it all blends together, and the only thing pervading remains the abuse itself. Set design and costumes also work alongside to add to the symbolism, as the set keeps all of Jude's friends in the background almost at all times, suggesting how life goes on for them while Jude is forced to push through whatever traumatic incident is shown at that point. After the abuse Jude endures at the hands of Caleb, he never changes his bloody costume again for the duration of the play, symbolic of how he is never the same in his adult life after he suffers said trauma. At one point, while recounting to Willem the abuse he endured at the hands of dr. Traylor, Jude removes the bloody costume and is left naked for a while, only for Willem to symbolically dress him again in the same shirt, at the 03:13:00 mark, once the trauma flashback concludes. This act can have multiple interpretations: either symbolic of Willem understanding that Jude can never change what has happened to him, or suggesting that Willem's insistence for physical intimacy was also traumatic for Jude, since the shirt first becomes bloody when Caleb sexually assaults him. Either way, it shows that the visual media manages to create its own symbols, confirming Granofsky's aforementioned statement that symbolism is the most potent way that storytellers have in order to accurately and wholly portraying trauma.

To conclude, van Hove's adaptation of Yanagihara's novel is a complex case study of the processes of adaptation, and how each element that goes into creating an adaptation adds layers over layers, presupposing interpretative acts and changes. As Hutcheon says, "recognition and remembrance are part of the pleasure (and risk) of experiencing adaptation; so too is change" (2006: 4), but, "an adaptation's double nature does not mean, however, that proximity or fidelity to the adapted text should be the criterion of judgment or the focus of analysis" (2006: 6). Instead, each medium's specificity must be taken into consideration, in order to make a full assessment and analysis of the derived work. The ample and challenging theme of trauma manages to be tackled in both mediums with success, so long as each medium maximizes its own strengths in order to create a vivid picture of what the traumatized individual experiences in his daily life. The visual media cannot use the same techniques in the same way they were used in the novel, but they can be adapted in order to better suit its own specificity, as long as the person who adapts the text has a core understanding of what the original artifices were meant to achieve.

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Writing the History of the Palestinian *Nakba* in *Return to Haifa*. From Novella to Militant Film

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Directed in 1982 and primarily screened to Western audiences, the film *Return to Haifa* is one of the first visual productions to show to the West a major episode of the Palestinian modern history, namely the expulsion of most of the Palestinian population from their homes by Zionist forces in 1948. This article examines the film of Kassem Hawal, an Iraqi filmmaker engaged in the Popular Front of the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), as a medium that writes the history of the Palestinian *Nakba*. Reproducing on the screen Ghassan Kanafani's eponymous novella (published in 1969), the film borrows major features of the Palestinian author's visual style, specifically in the use of the narrators' points of view and in its depiction of the individual experiences lived by the novella's characters. Yet, far from being a mere adaptation, the film stands out in its representation of the collective experience of the *Nakba* by Palestinians. The predilection of Hawal for archival images is central to understand the film as a tentative to use the novella in a visual writing of the Palestinian history of 1948. The analysis of interactions between archival and fictional shots demonstrates that Hawal's film reflects on the types of images that are necessary to write this history. The analysis finally shows the cinematic suggestion of the need of impossible images to visualize the collective experience of Palestinians in 1948.

Keywords

film; novella; *Nakba*; writing history; Ghassan Kanafani; Kassem Hawal; *Return to Haifa*.

Introduction

Published in 1969, twenty-one years after the expulsion of Palestinians from their homes (*al-Nakba* in Arabic), *Returning to Haifa* is a novella written by the Palestinian novelist Ghassan Kanafani[1]. It narrates the return of a Palestinian couple to their home in Haifa in 1967, a home from which they had been expelled during the Nakba in 1948 and which had been occupied since then by a Polish Jewish family. In 1982, Palestinian filmmaker Kassem Hawal adapted the novella into a film shot in a Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon. Although the novella's title suggests

[1]The English translation of the film's title is *Return to Haifa* while the novella's translation is *Returning to Haifa*. The article follows this distinction.

the return home as a major event, most of the story is a remembrance of the events that led to the departure of Said and Safia from their home on April 24th, 1948. They return to Haifa right after the war in June 1967 to look for their missing son, Khaldoun, whom they had to leave behind in 1948 amidst the bombings of their home city and the attacks on the local population. The devastated Palestinian couple goes back to its home in Haifa and meets the new occupants: Miriam, the Israeli adoptive mother of their son, and later their son who has been renamed "Dov". From the latter encounter starts a dialogue about the meaning of identity.

Compared to its relatively short period as a historical reference in the story, the day of expulsion from Haifa is nonetheless central, and "these visits [returning home] are sometimes an attempt to comprehend Al-Nakba" (Sa'di, 2002: 190). The journey our characters undertake in the diegesis can therefore be understood as a way of remembering this important event. The novella can be seen as "an attempt to give the Palestinian memory a new form of resistance rather than stressing a memory that languishes in the darkness of nostalgia." (Al-Haj Mohammad; Meryan, 2020: 75) In this manner, the *Nakba* seems to be more than a mere background for a fictional plot. It is the central source to which the memory of Said and Safia goes back to when trying to justify to themselves what happened.

The symbolic importance of Hawal's film resides in being "the first extended visual representation of the Palestinian experience of leaving Palestine in 1948" (Yaqub, 2018: 160). His interest in *Returning to Haifa* may be explained by his need to create a visual narrative of this major event. In addition, Hawal – and other filmmakers – waited many years before adapting *Returning to Haifa* to cinema. Ten years before Hawal, the Egyptian filmmaker Tawfiq Saleh adapted Kanafani's novella *Men in the Sun* (1963) into the *The Dupes*, a Syrian production of 1972. *Men in the Sun*'s relates the tragedy of three Palestinian refugees who were expulsed to Kuwait in 1948 and who died in their smuggling car on their way back to Palestine. Therefore, it is obvious that the *Nakba* is a topic of an extended visual representation for specific reasons.

If the representation of the Nakba in Kanafani's novel is admittedly central to the memory of the two characters, his depiction of the events which occurred on April 14th, 1948, is an instance of his "journalistic style" (Hamdi, 2011: 37). In fact, Kanafani seems to offer more than the personal memories of Said and Safia and pays attention to the factual exactitude of events. According to T. Hamdi, the information reported by Zionist newspaper the *Jerusalem post* confirms that the Zionist attacks against the Palestinians of Haifa "forc[ed] them to flee by only open escape route – the sea" (Hamdi, 2011: 38). For the Palestinian critic Ihsan Abbas, the realism of Kanafani was not a reproduction of reality in a "documentary" way (Abbas, 1993: 12). If "History divests the lived past of its legitimacy" (Nora, 1996: 3), if the individual witness usually interrogates History as an epistemological category that demands to establish the veracity of sources, we can raise the question in this article about the ways in which a reflection on the history of the Nakba as a collective experience of Palestinian people is treated in Hawal's film as an act of militant cinema.

Hawal's Militant Visibilization of the Palestinian History of *Nakba*

In addition to his cinematographic creation in the 1970s, Kassem Hawal's *Return to Haifa* is part of a Palestinian militant cinema that was defined as "an institutionalized, though modest film movement, operating within a national liberation movement of a stateless people." (Yaqub, 2018: 1) Even though he refuses to be identified as an ideological filmmaker who serves a political goal, his work can be thought as a part of "the context of political cinema movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s, particularly […] third world cinema

movements." (Yaqub, 2018: 1) After fleeing Iraq for political reasons, Hawal met Kanafani in Beirut in 1970 and worked as a literary critic for *Al-Hadaf*, the journalistic tribune of the Popular Front of the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), which Kanafani was then presiding. This personal relationship between the two authors is determined by the problematic of representing Palestinian history that the militant Palestinian cinema tried to resolve.

Return to Haifa is institutionally identified as a production of *Al-Ard* ("The Land" in Arabic), the artistic organ of the PFLP. It thrived in making Palestinians visible and audible at a time where Zionist leaders, such as Israeli prime minister Golda Meir, affirmed that "it was not as though there was a Palestinian people and [Israelis] came and threw them out and took their country from them. They did not exist." (Waxman, 2006: 50) The treatment of the Palestinian *Nakba* endows Hawal's film with a major merit of contributing to a debate about writing the history of the events of 1948 in Palestine. The Arabic word means "Catastrophe" or "Disaster" and describes the expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland in a series of events that started on 29 November 1947, when the UN announced the partition plan between Zionists and Arab Palestinians and ended on 14 May 1948 when the Zionist authorities announced the establishment of the State of Israel. The *Nakba* is a word that connotates the expulsion of Arabs from their homes and lands in Palestine. A historical debate emerged between the Zionist-Israeli and Palestinian-Arab narratives about the "departure" of Palestinians. Was it provoked by the mortal Zionist attacks and massacres or the appeals of Arab radios for Palestinians to leave their country? The two conflicting historical narratives are somehow sources of the present political situation and that's why historians have been debating since 1948 on how to "rewrite" the history of Palestinian's expulsion from their homes to rethink the relations between Palestinians and Israelis[2].

The enterprise of Hawal can be situated within the efforts of Palestinian historiography to produce a *visual counter-narrative* to the Zionist one. Since 1959, Palestinian major historian Walid Khalidi prepared the way for generations of researchers through his article "Why did the Palestinians leave?". Through archival research, Khalidi debunks the myth according to which Palestinians were ordered to leave by Arab broadcasting channels and affirms that "the Zionist offensive which caused the Arab exodus was a mixture of psychological and terroristic warfare." (Khalidi, 2005: 49) Further publications of other historians have not ceased to detail the massacres and the horrors that were endured by Palestinians in 1948[3]. However, the Palestinian narrative remained unheard and/or denied by the (pro-)Zionist historians, "alienating the public opinion in the West" (Masalha, 1992: 37). Given this situation, the cinematic production can be a powerful media to make the Palestinian voice hearable and visible in the West. As Franco-Lebanese intellectual Samir Kassir mentions in his commentary of the Israeli invasion of Beirut in the Summer 1982, Palestinian images in the press created "emotional recognition" among the Western readers: "Without erasing quite the emblematic figure of the terrorist, the image of the Palestinian is enriched, on this August 21, by the emotional dimension which determines, but in far greater proportions, the relationship of Westerners with Israel." (Kassir, 1983: 20) Such an emotional dimension is also decisive in using the film as a medium to narrate the past.

[2] The bibliography on this topic is very rich. A major reference is ROGAN Eugene L., SHLAIM Avi, *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008.

[3] To mention but a few, one can refer to the works of the Irish historian Erskine Childers (1961), of Nafez Nazzal (1978), and of Israeli New historians such as Benny Morris (1988) and Ilan Pappe (2006).

Rewriting the history of 1948 becomes *writing the history of the Nakba* for the Palestinian cinema of 1970s, especially after the release of the American film *Exodus* in 1960 by Otto Preminger, which offers a Zionist point of view on this history (Yaqub, 2018: 157). The film's institutional militant background reflects an intellectual preoccupation of the PFLP and *Al-Ard*. After the Zionist invasion and the massacres of 1948, Kanafani witnessed "destruction of the Palestinian cities [which] left the Palestinians without any cultural reference and created a huge cultural vacuum." (Khoury, 2012: 259) That's why Kanafani assumed the responsibility of rehabilitating Palestinian culture. Given this intellectual and political engagement, the *Nakba* in Kanafani's work can be considered part of the Palestinian efforts to write history. As Edward Said has mentioned: "One of the features of a small non-European people is that it is not wealthy in documents, nor in histories, autobiographies, chronicles, and the like. This is true of the Palestinians, and it accounts for the lack of a major authoritative text on Palestinian history." (Said, 1992: xxxviii-xxxix) Kanafani insists on this disadvantaging perception of Palestinians as a people unable to speak and to narrate its experience. In his novella, he insists on the idea that Palestinians were considered inferior to the European Zionists. He writes: "They're saying to us, 'Help yourselves, look and see how much better we are than you, how much more developed. You should accept being our servants. You should admire us.'" (Kanafani, 2000: 151)

Hawal's cinema responds to this problem of lacking credibility in the Palestinian potential to narrate on the international level. If *Return to Haifa*'s language is Arabic, it was *directed* to a European audience, in addition to the Arabic one. In fact, the film premiered in Damascus, but it was also screened in Tunisia, Russia, Algeria, Libya, England (Yaqub, 2018: 161). It is because of the lack of documentation of their history that Hawal granted importance to the cinema as an engaged apparatus to accumulate historical knowledge. In this way, he demonstrates what the French historian Marc Ferro had written earlier: "for colonized people, historical knowledge depends on media" (Ferro, 1988: 158). The concept of "visibilization" is essential to understand *Return to Haifa* as a militant film that relies on media to affirm the Palestinian narrative of this tragic historical event they suffered. The term comes from the visual culture studies to reflect on marginalized groups who are victims of "social invisibility", a political situation that characterizes "individuals who are excluded from authorized visualities and majority visual discourses" (Arrivé, 2020: 1) and who wait for a process that makes them *seeable* by others (Arrivé, 2020: 4). More specifically, this invisibility is about "the condition that certain images do not appear in the media, certain names of the dead are not utterable, certain losses are not avowed as losses." (Butler, 2004: 38) Visibilization is about an active social construct, rather than a passive state of being. Cinema, as an art of taking and projecting images, is a place to visibilize these populations and more importantly, it is a material device which creates images of these groups.

Literary and Cinematic Points of View on Collective Experience of Nakba

The encounter of the book and the film seems evident when we consider that Kanafani's *oeuvre* is profoundly marked by a cinematographic style expressed in his "attention to the visual" (Yaqub, 2018: 36). This is expressed in his interest to the details of scenes, which make of his novellas an example of the ascendancy of "Marxist realism" (Khoury, 2012: 252). The film adapts the novella's fictional narrative that revolves around the couple and their son, but it also pays attention to Kanafani's depiction of the displacement of Palestinian people from Palestine. In fact, the individual fate of Said, Safia and their son as a family on that day of the

Nakba is intertwined with the masses' movement in Kanafani's novella. This cinematographic realism of Kanafani is literally interpreted in Hawal's film on many levels in order to highlight the collective experience of fear and panic.

This first type of visual depictions of Kanafani can be seen in the interpretation of Safia's and Said's panic movement through the Palestinian masses leaving their homes to Haifa port. Kanafani's visual style uses the metaphors and comparisons to highlight this experience of panic during this day: "Like someone swimming against a torrent of water plummeting down a lofty mountain, Said forged ahead using his shoulders and forearms, his thighs, even his head." (Kanafani, 2000: 155) The narrator's point of view in the novella is dominant in almost all the depictions of the family as part of a Palestinian people. It is not the character who describes what she/he saw, but the narrator of the story. We can in fact notice that Kanafani chose an omniscient narrator, which gives an objective description of events (not distorted by the character's individual memories) and which puts the emphasis on the collective episode. It is therefore possible to say that in these individual-collective experiences, Kanafani seems to shed light more on the historical event rather than on the characters' memories. This hypothesis is confirmed when we look at Hawal's adaptation of the scene:

Figure 1a

Figure 1b

To evoke Safia's disoriented search of her husband Said while she left her son Khaldoun at home, Kanafani wrote: "She didn't remember exactly, but she knew that some staggering force rooted her to the ground, while the endless flow of people streamed by her and around her as though she were a tree surrounded by a flood of rushing water." (Kanafani, 2000: 157) The metaphor of the flow is reproduced in the film exactly as it was written. The omniscient narrator of the novella is translated in the bird's eye view: "it dwarfs the subject, which seems to be viewed with what may be omniscience, contempt, or superiority" (Grellet, 1996: 200). While the flow of people represents the crowd in both mediums, it is even more powerful in the film thanks to many factors. Watching Safia and Said trying to find their way against the current, represented by a disorganized, fast crowd, during a long scene which lasts 24 seconds and which is accompanied by the stressful, dramatic music, adds to the difficulties the main characters are facing (figures 1a and 1b). Moreover, the crowds' frenzy is heightened by the actors' participation, who are all refugees of the Palestinian camps in Lebanon for whom the participation in the filmmaking was an existential "meaningful experience for the Palestinians and Lebanese of North Lebanon" (Yaqub, 2018: 159). One last factor is the duration of those shots, thirteen seconds for Safia's movement and eleven seconds for Said's. The cinematographic time on the screen undoubtedly contributed to creating the masses as another character of the story, not less visible than the two individuals.

In this way, we can say that the novella and the film approach "social and historical problems […] from below" (Ferro, 1988: 163) as in the historical films or in the films about history. The questions are analyzed "from the viewpoint of the masses[4]" (163). Individuals' panic is part of a collective one: it is an individual-collective historical experience. It is the first technique used by Hawal to work on the collective experience of Palestinians from a different point of view than the subjective one of memory. However, if the film uses the previous images according to the novella's description, its work on the collective experience using archival images raises questions about how the filmmaker wants to visibilize the history of Palestinian people.

Duplication of archival and fictional images

Hawal's passion for archival images is here essential to understand the efforts of his militant cinema in writing a history that lacks visibility, especially in the Western World. These archival images are current events images of cinema or television borrowed from archival documents and inserted in a posterior non-fiction or fiction work (Maeck; Steinle, 2016: 13). *Return to Haifa* uses archival images that are inserted and integrated throughout the film. They are recognizable because of the "grainy aspect of the footage, damaged by time, the black and white images" (Fourest, 2012: 2). In the 1970s, Hawal showed interest in the archival images in the experimental film he made about September 1970, *The Hand* (*Al-Yad*) (Yakub, 2018: 94). Since they are retrieved from another source than the filmmaking process, the question here is how they are used by the filmmaker, and with which goal.

The introduction of archival images in *Return to Haifa*, was sometimes considered as a feature among others to contribute to an "ideological education" of Palestinians (Yaqub, 2018: 160). Images of three women running through the explosions, people escaping through the Haifa's port and leaving on boats appear among this category of images. However, these images raise the question on their function, as there are already fictional images that were made by the film to represent these events.

[4] Marc Ferro uses the term "viewpoint" here in its political, not cinematographic, connotation.

This is the case of two series of images that depict the masses fleeing the land of Haifa. The first set takes place at the opening scene of the film:

Figure 2a

Figure 2b

These two figures correspond to Kanafani's narrator point of view, expressed directly at the end of the first chapter when Said "[f]or the first time in twenty years […] remembered what happened in minute detail" (Kanafani, 2000: 153):

Even though he could not concentrate on anything specific, he couldn't help but see how the throng of people thickened with every step. People were pouring from the side streets into the main street leading down to the port – men, women, children, empty handed or carrying a few small possessions, crying or being floated" (Kanafani, 2000: 155)

The fictional image and the archival one both show the thick throng of Palestinians leaving after the bombings of the city. The parallelism of these two categories of images is not random when we see in the same scene another parallelism:

Figures 3a, 3b

The archival shot of figure (3a) directly follows the shot of figure (2a). It is the transition towards the fictional image of figure (2b) that, after some aerial shots of the port, is followed by the figure (3b). These parallelisms show that the editing process of the fictional film respects an order in which the archival images prepare the fictional ones. If the film was mainly meant to ideologically educate Palestinians, then what is the point of inserting what looks to be redundant thematic images that duplicate the same point of view?

The montage is considered the main technique to conceive the director's intentions in making films about history: "The use of parallel montage, the alternation of sound and image give the narration a form which can be found only in cinema" (Ferro, 1988: 162). This duplication shows that the film parallelizes fictional shots *according to* the archival images as a way of attributing a referential historical value to the fictional shots. This may explain Hawal's work not only as representing history of *Nakba* but also as writing it: "In the end, this intertwining of the notions of history, documentary and fiction, the relationship they maintain between one another to create meaning and achieve a form of truth, is not as far from historiography as one may think". (Veray, 2003: 5)

If, for now, we gather that Hawal writes the history of the masses fleeing the country during the *Nakba* through his montage of archival shots, we still are not sure about the goals of this practice. Indeed, the previous analysis shows that Hawal wanted to maintain the fictional structure of the narrator's point of view as well as the couple's own representations of the collective experience, but they also demonstrate that Hawal's intention was in conserving their perception of historical reality as it is represented in the novella. However, the duplication of archival and fictional images seems to denote more significance when it comes to the insertion of archival images which do not translate, or not directly, passages from Kanafani's novella.

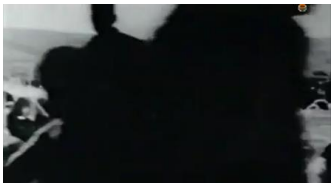
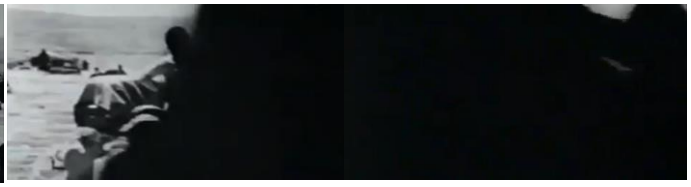
Palestinians in 1948: Visible But Still Invisible?

In the second set of shots, there is a change in the point of view of the narrator regarding the Palestinian throng's movement. An archival scene comes right after the fictional image of Safia, when, in a tense moment of the dialogue with their son Khaldoun, she starts remembering what happened. At the beginning of a very long scene of almost eight minutes, identified as the largest of the film and representing the exodus of Palestinians, Hawal inserts an archival scene filmed in a long tracking shot to the left: the shot shows a group of Palestinians who took refuge scattered on the beach and who are filmed from the side or against the light (like in figures 4a, 4b). The more the camera moves, the more organized the line of refugees becomes.

Figures 4a, 4b, 4c

This scene is long (26 seconds), but the fast travelling does not allow us to see the movement of the people. This archival image is linked to a fictional one that films the departure of the Palestinians:

This full shot allows the spectator to see the movement of departure of Palestinians from a slight pan shot to the right for twenty seconds. Between the two images, Hawal superimposed the fictional image over the archival one but in a very fast way. The archival images do not fade away and, consequently, does not leave the time for the spectator to see that there will be a transition between the scenes:

The quick bridging of these two scenes suggests a continuity between the archival and fictional scenes, although the viewpoint between them is not identical. In addition, although the fictional scene lasts fifteen seconds and allows the spectator to observe the Palestinian exodus, it maintains some invisibility of the Palestinians despite their presence in the image. This scene shows that the shadowed faces and silhouettes (figures 4a, 4b, 4c) in the archival shots are subsequently followed by Palestinians who are filmed from behind.

Identifying the Palestinian faces in the crowd is almost impossible in the archival scene because of the speed of the camera, the lateral shots, and because of the materiality of the

archival film which blackens even more the already black color of original shots. In Hawal's fictional shots, we see the Palestinians leaving, from their back, without being able to see their faces. As we saw in the previous section of this article, Hawal seems to value the visual realism of Kanafani by a loyal interpretation of the characters' point of view in the novella. His duplication of the fictional shots by the archival ones enhances the visibility of the history of the Palestinian masses. According to this analysis, there is a paradox in the invisibility of these masses. The introduction of archival images seems to anonymize Palestinians and can autodestruct the project of visibilizing the Palestinian people's history of the Nakba. In addition, as I stated earlier, the participation of Palestinian Nakba survivors in making these shots is morally valuable for them and unquestionable for Hawal.

The shadowing of Palestinian faces seems to be an intentional creative act of Hawal, that we analyze as an essential component of the fictional shot. It starts to show the fleeing of Palestinians at the horizon before a small child pops out from behind the camera to cross its field. The long shot by the camera focalizes the spectator's attention on the far movement of women and men. That's why the appearance of the child confirms Hawal's will of not showing the Palestinians. The boy's face is also non-identifiable, despite his proximity to the camera. Although he crosses the camera's field laterally, he *makes sure* not to show his face.

The child's appearing is not without reminding us of *Handala*, the famous character of the Palestinian cartoonist Naji al-Ali. The in 1987 in London assassinated author said that his graphic character "was the arrow and the compass, pointing steadily towards Palestine. Not just Palestine in geographical terms, but Palestine in its humanitarian sense – the symbol of a just cause, whether it is located in Egypt, Vietnam or South Africa" (Masalha, 2012: 128). By refusing to show Palestinian faces, Hawal seems to affirm an ethical and political position on the type of images that should compose a history of their *Nakba*.

In all, Hawal's adaptation of Kanafani's novella puts the emphasis on a secondary character: the Palestinian people. Although represented as a disoriented crowd or as faceless individuals, they are at the heart of the work created by Hawal's editing, his intertwining of fictitious and archival images, and the time he allows the spectators to observe them and the aftereffects of this major historical event on them. Hawal's project is more than making Palestinian visible since they are at the center of the fictional narrative and the archival images. His project is about showing the limits of representing the feeling of loss.

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When Literature Turns into History: *Heart of Darkness* (1902) by Joseph Conrad and *Avatar* (2009) by James Cameron

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More than one century after the publication of *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad's conceptualization of the world and representation of both the Whiteman and the African black characters still have an impact on the representation of the Other whether African or non-African. This article examines the legacy of Conrad's novel through James Cameron's *Avatar* produced by 20th Century Fox and released in 2009. It mainly refers to Roland Barthes's view of connotation and denotation and art, in this case image and cinema, as a means to transit meaning. His framework is developed in *Mythologies* (1972), *Image-Music-Text* (1977) and *Elements of Semiology* (1986). The analysis relies on specific selected citations from Conrad's novel and their equivalent visual quotations from Cameron's media text focusing on four signs. I study *Avatar* as a text that reproduces Conrad's novel, which certifies the internal and external impact of expressions such as "the interminable waterway" and "the European genius" on twenty-first century cinema. Conrad's masterpiece still draws the faces of the non-Western that Hollywood unconsciously reproduces.

Keywords

adaptation; *Avatar*; film; *Heart of Darkness*; literature; sign.

There is never *art* but always meaning.
(Roland Barthes)

During the early years of film production that coincide with the early twentieth century, Virginia Woolf describes film as a "parasite" to literary texts, which are nothing more than the poor target or the "prey" and the "victim" of this medium. She considers that film is rescued by literature but "this alliance is unnatural"[1] as the image is nothing more than a shortcut deforming great works of literature. By the twenty-first, transforming a literary work to a film or a media text is referred to as adaptation then an appropriation, a violation, a deformation in some other cases a revival. The reproduction the timeless William Shakespeare's plays, the adaptation of Jane Austen's classic *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and the vampire narratives by Stephanie Meyer amplified the success of these literary works. These adaptations are interpretations and in some ways an appropriation of the text. *Heart of Darkness* is one of the most famous English novels that inaugurated the modern and postmodern arts. The popularity of the novel doubled as many

[1]See The Essays of Virginia Woolf (1925-1928) edited by Andrew McNeillie.

filmmakers in the image of Francis Ford Coppola[2] and James Gray[3], directly or indirectly, give life to this masterpiece.

Heart of Darkness (1902) is one of the earliest English modern literary works written by the Polish- English author Joseph Conrad (1857-1924). The story is mainly told by Charles Marlow who undergoes a journey from Europe to the Congo River in the African continent, which was a Belgian colony. Marlow's narrative centres mainly on finding Kurtz and bringing him back home. *Avatar* (2009), on the other side, is an American science fiction film written and directed by the Canadian-American director and producer James Cameron (1954), distributed by 20th Century Fox. It was released on December 18th, 2009. The movie's title refers to the controlled blue humanlike bodies in the purpose of interacting with the Na'vi, the Pandora's indigenous population. Jake Sully a paraplegic marine unable to walk replaces his twin brother Tom who works in the RDA Corporation that engages in mining a precious mineral known as Unobtanium. It essentially portrays the experience of the protagonist Sully, performed by Sam Worthington, in his journey from earth to Pandora to spy and collect information about the indigenous population. He is given a Na'vi body which allows him to move and breath.

Heart of Darkness and *Avatar* are produced a century apart by two of the most creative minds of the twentieth and twenty-first century literature and cinema. They both received much attention from scholars and critics. *Heart of Darkness* is often considered for its imperialist and orientalist stance (Roberts; Parras; Siber), its "racist" portrayal of the African characters and land (Achebe; Hansson; Hawkins), its psychological dimension through the journey (Assad Nassab) as well as its colonial and postcolonial rewritings (Farn). Like *Avatar* which is often looked at as an ecological call for awareness (Ordona, 2009), Conrad's novel is also offered an ecocritical reading. Mouhoubi attempts a study of both the literary work and the film, in his Magister dissertation. The author considers the shift or "the transmutations and transformations" of the imperial discourse since William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1611) to *Avatar* looking at the Power/Knowledge relations[4]. Boumaza and Boucena approaches, in their Master dissertation, both primary sources from a linguistic perspective, arguing that Cameron "Plagiarised" Conrad[5].

On the whole and to my own knowledge no researcher dived into both works considering *Avatar* as an adaptation or even an appropriation of Conrad's novel using a Barthesian perspective. Cameron acknowledges through different interviews that the movie shares themes and issues with many other films and novels[6]. In 2009, Cameron read to the United States District Court a sworn declaration where he explains the resources behind *Avatar* mentioning *Chrysalis*, *Xenogenesis*, *Mother* and *Wind Warrior* (Cameron); but not *Heart of Darkness*.

Therefore, my article attempts a Barthesian reading of *Avatar*, looking at the film as an "adaptation" reworking Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. The theoretical lenses are mainly brought from Barthes's *Rhetoric of the Image* and *Mythologies*. I shall argue that a media text combined with a literary text produce meaning outside the historical context of its content, but in relation to present-day issues. Scholars who are trapped in assessing the accuracy and the faithfulness of

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[2] *Apocalypse Now* (1979) with Martin Sheen and Marlon Brando.

[3] *Ad Astra* (2019) with Brad Pitt and Tommy Lee Jones.

[4] See *From Pax Britannica to Pax Americana, Dialectic of Power/Knowledge in* Avatar *(2009),* Heart of Darkness *(1902) and* The Tempest *(1611),* A Magister Dissertation by Mohamed Mouhoubi.

[5] See *A Stylistic Comparative Study of the Movie* Avatar *(2009) and Joseph Conrad's (1988) Short Story* Heart of Darkness, Master Dissertation by Boumza Walid and Boucena Fatima.

[6] See James Cameron interview with James Jeff (2007) and the 2009 interview at the Los Angeles Times where he mentions Conrad and Rudyard Kipling.

the texts overlook the benefit of creativity in restoring literary works. Linda Hutcheon explains that the issue of faithfulness and authenticity are contradictory elements that cannot be escaped while adapting literary works to the visual. Alterations are effectively an important means to refresh the literary work and treat modern-day relevant issues. The productions include "equivalences" that are intentionally used (10). *Avatar* is not a carbon copy of *Heart of Darkness* and I am not, in any way, trying to make it so; however and because a text is "a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture", the film reproduces the single story of the Imperialist tradition where it is the Whiteman's Burden to save the indigenous. Using four specific signs and clearly selected quotations from Conrad and snapshots from the film, I shall clarify the way Cameron reproduces the same words through images, either consciously or unconsciously to build similar conceptions of the Other.

Roland Barthes: Image and the Death of the Author

According to Barthes, cultural elements that have a clear influence on everyday life are reproduced, adapted to the needs of the time to convert their particular "historical class-culture into a universal nature". He, through different publications, argues "culture is 'a language"' investigating and cultivating signs. His critical look at wrestling, soap powders and detergents, the drinking of wine, toys, and his analysis of the young black man in French military uniform, appearing on the cover of the "Paris Match" magazine, are all used to elucidate that it does not matter how simple and innocent the image is, there is always a second level of meaning. In other words, Barthes establishes a theory that can be used to study the language of culture. Hence, his framework, as he confirms, is "an ideological critique" of the language of mass-culture (1972: 08).

The starting point of Barthes's theoretical framework is Saussure's notion of the sign. As far as media texts are concerned, signs can be a sound, an image on screen, a musical tone, a gesture, or an object that stand for something outside the frame. In *Rhetoric of the Image* (1964), Barthes explains that the "analogical representation" produces meaning at two levels: a non-coded iconic message which is the literal denoted one and a symbolic connoted message. The denoted message corresponds to the first degree of understanding, the literal image or the dictionary meaning. It is a clear, innocent and objective description of the content of the image. Though superficial, it offers the details from which the symbolic message can be extracted. He asserts that the sign is "drawn from a cultural code" which gives it a connotative meaning and a cultural dimension. The study of signs varies depending on how they are perceived and interpreted. It is the result of a motivated combination. These signs, as he goes on, are assembled in semiological systems that are snapshots. The result of this combination is signification (37-44).

The power of the discourse of media lies in its multimodality that can announce "the death of the author". However, the new produced images are so rooted in the old. Thus, they are reproductions, interpretations and "appropriations". Noel Carroll, in his essay "The Power of Movies" (1996), explains that films are authoritative because they speak for everyone (78-79). The image, variable framing i.e., camera movement and narrative contribute in the making of the final story. The positioning of the camera helps the audience and guides its gaze. He writes: "Through cutting and camera movement, the film maker can rest assured that the spectator is perceiving exactly what she should be perceiving at the precise moment she should be perceiving it" (84). According to Carl Casinghino, the high and the low camera angles are particularly attention grabbing in the way they highlight different meanings or aims:

The Angle	Camera Positioning	Aims
High Angle Shot	Camera above the subject with lens facing down	This camera position makes character seems weak and allows the audience have control over him or her
Low Angle Shot	Camera lower than the subject	It highlights the stand of characters and objects by giving them magnitude and power.

Table 01: Camera Angles and their Meaning According to Carl Casinghino (2011: 23)

First Sign: The Forest

In one of the most famous passages from *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad writes:

> Going up that river was like traveling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings. An empty stream, a great silence, an impenetrable forest. The air was warm, thick, heavy, sluggish. There was no joy in the brilliance of sunshine. The long stretches of the waterway ran on, deserted, into the gloom of overshadowed distances. On silvery sand-banks hippos and alligators sunned themselves side by side. (54)

The first sign that I am considering is "the tree" and "the forest". In Conrad's perception, the Congo is the Jungle, and in the jungle trees are the dominant agent on the land. Trees are also vegetation that stands for the absence of civilization, as there are not clearly defined roads among the trees. The times when vegetation ruled the earth were ancient times of the primitive tribe. Graeme Harper and Jonathan Rayner argue that natural landscape and cultural forms have a very complex relationship (2010). From a nineteenth century perspective and both during the age of industrialization and technology, a gloomy thick forest is, in essence, a synonym to primitive stages of development. In the above passage important terms like the river, trees, forest, waterway, hippos and alligators shape not just the content of the novel, but also the stories that are produced about people who are different from the west. The conceptualization of the Other, the African is Conrad's case is linked to these terms that take a cultural significance. This is reason why I look at them as signs with a denotative and a connotative dimension.

In *Avatar*, Sully arrives to this dense forest in another planet ruled by the trees and terrifying sounds of unknown animals to penetrate its silence and emptiness. Figure 01 is among the first images we have about the Pandora. Despite the fact that the film is set in the year 2154, the distant planet is ruled, like the Congo, by trees. The snapshot that I selected is a long shot taken from a high angle Camera. It demonstrates the giant trees with the foggy grey and humid atmosphere. It seems to live in the dawn of history. Because of the thickness of the trees, sun rarely penetrates the land which creates a gloomy atmosphere. Stronger and fiercer animals replace the hippos and alligators on the riverbanks. It seems that Pandora is "new heart of darkness". It is thus assumed that when compared to the west and planet Earth, the Congo and Pandora are stations of savagery and primitiveness. Barthes maintains that the huge power of film lies in its ability "to naturalise" the constructed meaning. In other words, what is more

"normal" and "natural" than an unknown planet with a gloomy foggy forest and a ferocious wildlife!

Figure 01: "Trees are kings" (00:00:33)[7]

The inhabitants of Pandora worship the "Sacred Tree of souls" or "Goddess Eywa". Their "Hometree" listens and cures them. The image of the giant tree is transformed to a cultural mythic aspect that is destroyed by the new arrivals. This mythic representation recalls the power and the symbolic significance of the tree throughout world mythologies.[8] Barthes's definition of myth is complex as he sometimes uses it to refer to connotation sometimes to ideology. In other instances, it is discourse (Gwenllian Jones, 2001: 419). Thus, anything can be transformed to a mythic element. Barthes explains that cultural myths are used as instruments to transform "history into nature" (1972: 129). Thanks to myth, he adds, everything is "immediately frozen into something natural". To clarify this point, Daniel Chandler says that "Barthes did not see the myths of contemporary culture as simply a patterned agglomeration of connotations but as ideological narratives" (2007: 144). Working on this argument, I can say that the tree and the forest as dealt with in *Avatar* are copies based on a material that has been worked on several times. Likewise, "mythical speech is made of a material which has already been worked on so as to make it suitable for communication" (Barthes, 1972: 129). This "brute" image that seems "frontal and clear" is transformed to cultural code or a mythic discourse that contributes to making of the eternal image of the tree and the forest as a synonym to fear and primitiveness. This connotation or "mythic discourse" is very common is both western literature and Hollywood[9].

Second Sign: The waterway

The second sign that I think is "mythical" is the waterway. Conrad writes:

> The sea-reach of the Thames stretched before us like the beginning of an interminable waterway. In the offing the sea and the sky were welded together without a joint, and in the luminous space the tanned sails of the barges drifting up with the tide seemed to stand still in red clusters of canvas sharply peaked, with gleams of varnished spirits (02).

[7] All snapshots used here are taken by myself with the VLC media player from the DVD version of *Avatar* (2009).

[8] See Charles M. Skinner, *Myths and Legends of Flowers, Trees, Fruits, and Plants in all Ages and in All Climes* (1911)

[9] Kipling's *Jungle Book* (1894) and Antoine Fuqua's *Tears of the Sun* (2003) are good examples.

The passage is loaded with signs that make a clear reference to the Thames as a source of civilization, the ships that take civilization and bring goods. It is also a strong reference the image of the British Empire that controls the sea and the waters. "The sea", "the Thames", "an interminable waterway", "the offing the sea and the sky welded together", "the luminous space", "sails", "the tide" and the "varnished spirits" stand for the greatness of this English culture. Conrad makes use of the British imperial discourse about the open horizons and the Empire. I shall argue that in the same way Barthes claims the "Italianicity" of the sign of Panzani advertisement (1977: 34-35), I can argue the "Britishinicity" of this view. Like "Italianicity", "Britishinicity" "is the condensed essence of everything that could be" British. It takes us to the glorious days of "La Mission Civilisatrice" and "The White Man's Burden". Mouhoubi uses the snapshot of the spaceship that replaces the Nellie as a connotation of knowledge and thus of power (29-30; 51).

Reading and interpreting the waterway as a sign is associated with a wider social and historical context since it amplifies and extends the literal meaning. To decipher connotations, we need to convert it to a simple clear *communiqué* using extra elements as well as taking into consideration Photogenia, Trick Effects, Pose, Objects, Aestheticism, and Syntax (Barthes, 1977: 21-22-23-24) to exploit its "polysemic values". Overall, the denotation of the sign is nothing more than the description of its content. Connotation, on the other hand, indicates a cultural sophisticated meaning. The combination of denotation and connotation offers the sign an ideological meaning that transforms it to a myth. Again, here an extreme long shot is used with a high angle camera that puts two planets (objects) in the front, Earth and Pandora. The space is luminous with different shades of blue lighting a much darker or unknown space. The immense waterway, the offing view of the sea and the sky joined, the luminous space, all these phrases fit perfectly figure 02. The times when Britain ruled the waves. Now, through *Avatar*, the Americans rule the space. The Nellie moves from the tiny British Islands with its Thames River to a larger Empire. In *Avatar*, the camera and the protagonist move from the tiny Earth to the richer and spacious Pandora, and the interminable space.

Figure 02: "The interminable" Space (00:02:30)

The Third Sign: The Decaying Machinery

Barthes, in his discussion of "cultural mythologies", asserts that they are used as natural substances to serve an external ideological motivation; it "is always a language-robbery". He later clarifies that "the negro saluting the French flag" or "the seasonal fall in fruits prices" are not symbols of nationalism, but signifiers used to connote the French imperialism. This demonstrates the reason behind Barthes's consideration of myth as "a stolen language" where cultural aspects are used "to naturalize through them" certain ideologies. He adds: "nothing can be safe from myth" (131). In *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad writes: "I came upon more pieces of decaying machinery, a stack of rusty rails" (22). The expression of "the decaying machinery"

is a reference to an old abandoned rail-way that stands also for the failed past mission. Cameron uses machinery in *Avatar*; a machinery that is more sophisticated and not easily rusted. The director uses high camera angles and long and extreme long shots to demonstrate the strength and the magnitude of the machinery in comparison to the human size.

Figure 03: "The decaying Machinery" (00:04:00-00:04:10)

In 1975, *Cahiers du Cinema* interviewed the historian and filmmaker Marco Ferro. He explains that "images start being considered as 'documents', as 'historical proofs', even as 'weapons?'[10] I would argue that by the Twenty-first century, images of developed machinery are weapons of domination and pride. The decaying machinery of *Heart of Darkness* becomes a historical proof of failure of "la mission civilisatrice"; but a sign of development; sophistication and strength in *Avatar*; informally said "the bigger, the better". Cameron attempts "to undo" and then "redo", or "decode" and then "recode", to reverse Hall's consideration of media texts. He uses the same signs and then reproduces a different image. Barthes argues that a text is "a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture" (Barthes quoted in Allen: 13). The figure above is a visual quotation from Conrad's work, which is, without a doubt, a cultural ingredient in the American demonstration of power and technological advancement.

The Fourth Sign: The Agents of Civilization

The last sign I am considering in this article is the agent of civilization, the white men in Conrad's and the earth people in Cameron's. Kurtz is the "legendary" "first-class agent", "the painter" and the "universal genius" who represents the "Us". He is "an idol" and Europe's "remarkable man". As an agent of civilization, "all Europe contributed to the making" of this "the gifted Kurtz". He is intrusted by the international Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs to make a report on the indigenous people. This agent of civilization ends up "ill" and in the shape of a "shade" presiding primitive rituals (82). He is white but the connotation is that white is civilization. In his report, Kurtz writes that the white "in the nature of supernatural beings" who must approach the natives "with the might of a deity". Kurtz is transformed to a leader by these "savages". Marlow recalls the moment when "Mr Kurtz had come down the river, bringing along with him all the fighting men of the lake tribe" (95). "It was Kurtz who had ordered the attack on the steamer" (105). In *Avatar*, the agents of civilization are the "sky people". They are also white people who come from a far way "civilized" places.

[10] See the collection in Daney & Ramonet, 2000.

Barthes says that "there is no fixity in mythical concepts" (1972: 120). Thus, I shall argue that in the same way films are used to reinforce and promote national identity; they are also used to challenge it. Jim Leach asserts that through films, "myths of the national character are represented, examined, reinforced, and/or contested" (2004: 06). In other words, instead of killing the protagonist Sully like Kurtz is killed in *Heart of Darkness*, Cameron depicts Sully as a "White Messiah" (Brooks, 2010) who saves the indigenous people by becoming one of them. It is the eternal idea of the white man's burden or the American burden. Barthes argues the "end of the past" and the emergence of "presentness" that films evoke in us (1977: 44). In other words, films do not report the past, but the whole *mise en scene* makes us feel that it deals with the present more it reproduces the past. Fredrick Jameson names this fact "the eternal present" (Hughes-Warrington, 2007: 59). This brings into perspective, Chimamanda Adichie's vision sameness and *The Danger of a Single Story* which spotlights on the traumatic effect and the power of literature in creating and diffusing the same stereotypes and images about people and culture in the world which creates the impossibility if viewing the Other or the self away from the received representation.

Figure 04: "The Agent of Civilization" (00:07:29) (01:18:00)

The above snapshots refer to the world or the realm of Jake; his new world the one of Pandora. The first one represents Jake's familiar world and his usual life Earth as a place of safety and security. He is introduced as Jake the wheelchair with a white skin. Whereas, the second snapshot represents the new and unknown world of Pandora in which Sully is swallowed in, he is the blue Avatar who walks on his feet. Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* describes the unfamiliar world where Jack is thrown into as "a dream landscape of curiously fluid, fabulous, ambiguous forms" (89). Yet, Pandora is also a dark forest, mysterious and occupied by dangerous creatures and predators. Sully undergoes a metamorphosis turning him to a native but noble savage. He is "swallowed into the unknown and would appear to have died" (83). Jack is the agent of civilization that turns to be a leader of the native. He penetrates Pandora and becomes one of the Na'vi. He is a single connotator of a larger discourse (1986: 91). Sully learns how to be native; He demonstrates a mastery of both the human and the Na'vi worlds. He is one of the Omatikaya and thus a Master in two worlds; the known and the unknown.

Conclusion

Words like agents of civilization, waterways, are very significant and "filled with very rich history". In this case, the view of the ocean that is also a water way, the low camera angle that

shows the greatness of the leader are all "naturalized" "discontinuous scattered signs" of the imperial ideology. These signs appear in different ways and "this repetition [...] allows the mythologist to decipher the myth" (1977: 119) i.e., it is thanks to the reappearance of such signs that we recognize the connoted ideological meaning lying behind, in this case, British imperialism.

Adaptation is not a matter of authenticity and faithfulness but of an issue of creativity and visionary perspectives that set the floor for new ways to link cultural products as ancient as *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and as symbolic as the ceremonies of coronation. *Heart of Darkness* and *Avatar* definitely share the "Imperial Gaze" of the white men established by Conrad through the novel. The forest, the tree, the waterway, the white agents, the decaying machinery are the four signs that I selected to consider the way Cameron's *Avatar* appropriates the journey to craft an Americanised British classic. Both texts are trapped in the reproduction of the single story that generates fixed identities. "Conrad's Darkness" is replaced by "Cameron's Blue Light". However, the "Them vs. Us" dichotomy controlled and still controls much of the western discourse, whether it is in literature or in popular arts, which explains the way directors, make and will make of this literary work a fresh material for the silver screen. It seems to me that picture-makers are the unconscious victims of the literary texts.

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Du papier à l'écran, la ville de Paris dans *Le journal d'une femme de chambre*

From Paper to Screen, *The Diary of a Chambermaid*

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« Ce n'est pas de ma faute si les âmes, dont on arrache les voiles et qu'on montre à nu, exhalent une si forte odeur de pourriture »... Luis Buñuel et le scénariste Jean-Claude Carrière ont choisi de transposer l'action du roman éponyme d'Octave Mirbeau en 1930, au moment de l'éclosion des ligues fascistes! Mirbeau, lui, inscrit les épisodes de son roman à l'ère de l'Affaire Dreyfus. Dans cet article, nous essayerons de montrer l'importance de la ville de Paris chez Octave Mirbeau et à quel point Luis Buñuel dans son adaptation cinématographique est resté fidèle à la conception de Mirbeau. Pour ce faire, nous nous concentrerons sur quelques différences décelables entre le roman et le film pour montrer qu'il s'agit d'une « belle infidèle » et que Mirbeau, en regardant le film de Buñuel, n'eût certainement pas reconnu son enfant.

Keywords

movie adaptation; film; novel; Octave Mirabeau; Luis Buñuel.

"It's not my fault if the souls, whose veils are torn off and shown naked, exhale such a strong smell of rot"... Luis Buñuel and the screenwriter Jean-Claude Carrière have chosen to transpose the action of the eponymous novel by Octave Mirbeau in 1930, at the time of the birth of the fascist leagues! Mirbeau places the episodes of his novel in the era of the Dreyfus Affair. In this paper, we will try to show the importance of the city of Paris in Octave Mirabeau's work and the extent to which Luis Buñuel in his film adaptation remained faithful to Mirabeau's perspective. To do this, we will focus on some differences between the novel and the film in order to show that it is a "Belle-Infidel" and that Mirbeau, watching Buñuel's film, would certainly not have recognized his child.

Le cinéma et la littérature sont deux arts qui partagent plusieurs aspects. L'art romanesque en particulier est une source intarissable pour les grands cinéastes. Il serait donc erroné de nier l'apport de la littérature aux autres arts et son importance dans les études des phénomènes qui touchent d'une manière directe tout ce qui se rattache à l'homme. De ce fait, la ville en tant que construction humaine occupe une place privilégiée dans la littérature ainsi que dans les autres formes artistiques. Elle est pour l'artiste une toile de fond qui sert à contenir ses idées, ses sentiments, sa vision du monde, son expérience ontologique. Elle est également sa

source d'inspiration et s'investit donc d'une aura mythique. Le romancier et le cinéaste prennent la position d'un témoin : ils donnent à penser, à voir (Fathi, 2020 : 165). La ville qu'ils représentent n'a parfois rien à voir avec la ville que décrit le géographe ou l'urbaniste. Dans les romans du XIX^{ème} siècle, le Paris de la même époque a, été traité différemment selon ce que Maupassant nomme dans sa préface de *Pierre et Jean* « l'illusion particulière » (Maupassant, 2011 : 9). La même ville, à l'époque contemporaine, est pour les cinéastes un espace qui suscite maintes réflexions et qui est vu différemment selon la culture et le regard de chacun d'eux.

Octave Mirbeau confère à la ville de Paris un statut particulier. Dans toutes ses œuvres littéraires, cette ville est présente et son statut est constant. Pour lui, c'est une ville monstre : « Paris m'étonna. Il me fit l'effet d'un grand bruit et d'une grande folie. Les individus et les foules passaient bizarres, incohérents, effrénés, se hâtant vers des besognes que je me figurais terribles et monstrueuses. » (Mirbeau, 2000 : 141). Or, dans l'adaptation cinématographique du *Journal d'une femme de chambre* de Mirbeau, la ville de Paris est absente. Nous tenterons de démêler l'écheveau de cette question et de mesurer l'impact de l'absence de la ville de Paris dans le film sur la portée significative, philosophique et historique de l'œuvre originale, à savoir le roman de Mirbeau. Pour ce faire, l'intérêt sera centré d'abord sur la ville en tant que thème majeur dans l'univers romanesque mirbellien. Puis, l'accent sera mis sur l'absence de la ville de Paris dans le film de Luis Buñuel *Le Journal d'une Femme de Chambre.*

1. La ville : une thématique de poids chez Octave Mirbeau

Qui dit ville dit société et dit également la puissance de l'être humain et sa capacité de manipuler la nature à sa guise. La ville est le lieu privilégié des échanges, des affrontements, des luttes pour et contre le pouvoir. Dans le texte romanesque, il y a pareillement des personnages qui vivent dans la ville, y travaillent, s'y déplacent et de cette manière l'écrivain ne se contente pas seulement de décrire cet espace, il l'invente. Il ne théorise pas, il fait voir, c'est ce que Louis Aragon entendrait par « le mentir vrai ». La bibliographie des travaux consacrés aux liens entre la littérature et la ville est, sans doute, très abondante. Sur cette dualité ville/texte, de nombreuses études thématiques existent déjà : thème de l'ascension sociale, thème de la violence dans les villes, le thème de l'ermite, de la prostituée, du flâneur… Ces études ont comme point commun une confrontation entre l'individu et la masse urbaine. L'étude que nous proposons n'entre pas dans ce cadre et l'auteur que nous avons choisi est peu étudié et injustement méconnu. Si le XIX^{ème} siècle est le siècle de Hugo, de Balzac, de Zola, de Flaubert, de Maupassant, pour ne citer que les romanciers français, il est également le siècle d'Octave Mirbeau (Fathi, 2020 : 167).

Journaliste redouté, critique d'art doué, dramaturge très joué, romancier novateur, Octave Mirbeau est l'un des auteurs intéressants de la Belle Epoque. Il a cependant été mal compris, mal classé et injustement indexé. À la différence de ses contemporains, il ne s'intéresse pas à la ville en tant que lieu d'échange, d'ascension sociale ou de confrontation entre l'individu et son entourage. À cet égard, nous pouvons citer *La Curée* de Zola, où la ville de Paris est présentée comme un lieu privilégié pour l'ascension sociale.

La ville, selon Mirbeau, est un espace qui corrompt la nature de l'homme, elle est selon l'auteur lui-même « le renversement de la nature » (Mirbeau, 2000 : 286), c'est « un enfer bouillonnant » (*ibidem*).

Dans tous ses romans, comme nous le montrerons *infra*, Paris est un lieu d'étouffement de l'être et de son génie, un espace d'emprisonnement et d'incommunicabilité.

Les personnages de Mirbeau se caractérisent par leur refus de la civilisation et, conséquemment, par leur dégoût de la vie urbaine. Cette opposition et ce déchirement entre leur nature et la culture imposée par la société constituent un thème présent dans toutes les œuvres de l'auteur. Le narrateur du *Calvaire* parle des « pernicieux effets d'une éducation si contraire à "sa" nature » (Mirbeau, 2000 : 206) et, parmi ces effets horriblement néfastes, on trouve un être mutilé, hybride : « Suivant les caprices de ma mémoire, les hantises de mes souvenirs, je pense avec la pensée de l'un, j'écris avec l'écriture de l'autre ; je n'ai ni pensée ni style qui m'appartiennent » (Mirbeau, 2000 : 286). Paris, qui est le symbole de la culture au sens péjoratif du terme, c'est-à-dire tout ce qui transfigure et dénature l'être humain, est enduit métaphoriquement d'une substance toxique. Dans *Les 21 jours d'un neurasthénique*, l'atmosphère de cette ville monstre est empoisonnée :

> Le médecin me dit : Parbleu ! c'est toujours la même chose… le lait ne vaut rien… le lait empoisonne vos enfants." Alors je dis au médecin : "Indiquez-moi où il y a du bon lait, et j'irai en acheter." Mais le médecin secoua la tête, et il répondit : Il n'y a pas de bon lait à Paris… Envoyez votre enfant à la campagne (Mirbeau, 2001 : 197)

Le lait, dans ce cas, est une métaphore de tout ce qui existe dans la ville : air, terre et toute autre substance. Voici un exemple tiré du *Calvaire*, roman autobiographique de Mirbeau, qui montre qu'à Paris tout est flétri :

> Cela me surprit beaucoup d'y rencontrer des arbres. Comment avaient-ils pu germer là, dans ce sol de pavés, s'élever parmi cette forêt de pierres, au milieu de ce grouillement, leurs branches fouettées par un vent mauvais ? (Mirbeau, 2000 :141)

Dans le roman (en fait, un récit très court) intitulé *Dans le ciel*, Lucien, qui est un peintre quittant la vie champêtre pour vivre à Paris, ne tarde pas à se rendre compte de l'erreur qu'il avait commise :

> — Tout ce qu'il y a de fort, tout ce qu'il y a de bon, Paris l'appelle et le dévore… Des meilleurs, Paris ne fait que des fous ou des crapules… Moi, je sens que je deviens fou, ici… Paris me mange le cerveau, me mange le cœur, me rompt les bras… On ne sera heureux que lorsqu'il n'y aura plus que des champs, des plaines, des forêts… (Mirbeau, 2001 : 87-88)

Mirbeau s'est livré en toute logique à une condamnation irrévocable des méfaits de la ville corruptrice. Cette ville qui altère les valeurs et qui enchaîne les compétences et les capacités et du citoyen et de l'artiste (Fathi, 2020 : 169).

Les personnages mirbelliens sont souvent issus de la paroisse et, dès qu'ils mettent les pieds sur le sol citadin, l'ennui les dévore. Bolorec, personnage de *Sébastien Roch*, avoue qu'il n'aime pas Paris (Mirbeau, 2000 : 720) et dans *L'Ecuyère* le narrateur affirme que l'air de Paris l'étouffe. Dans une courte nouvelle intitulée *La Bonne*, l'ennui que suscite Paris est décrit métaphoriquement comme une tombe engloutissant les êtres, la narratrice nous présentant cette ville comme étant une jungle :

> Et puis Paris, dont j'avais toujours entendu parler comme d'une chose terrible et qui tue les pauvres gens, Paris m'effrayait. Je me le représentais ainsi qu'une grande tombe pleine de feu et de fumée, dans laquelle on entre, et qui vous dévore. Je frissonnai à la pensée que j'allais être ensevelie là-dedans, pour toujours peut-être, et j'étais près de défaillir quand le train, après avoir sifflé longtemps, s'arrêta… C'était Paris… (Mirbeau, 2012 : 48).

Nous fermons cette parenthèse qui avait comme but de montrer que la ville de Paris est toujours présente dans les œuvres de Mirbeau et que son image est systématiquement constante. L'écrivain ne dénonce pas la vie citadine seulement à cause de l'évolution sociale ou de la recherche effrénée d'une fortune rapide comme le faisaient ses contemporains, mais parce que l'urbanisme et notamment la vie à Paris, par sa complexité et ses complications, sont contre la nature humaine. Chez l'auteur, l'impact négatif de la vie urbaine dépasse l'homme, il affecte même l'animal. Le romancier dans l'un de ses romans les plus épatants et dont le héros n'est que son propre chien, exprime le sentiment de cet animal éponyme obligé de vivre à Paris. Nous présentons une séquence narrative qui montre le malaise de vivre dans la ville :

À Paris, Dingo redevint triste. Il ne sut plus que faire. Trop de gens, trop de maisons, de rues encombrées, plus assez d'espaces et de grands horizons. Il languissait, s'étiolait, ne montrait aucun empressement à sortir, dormait presque tous les jours, roulé en boule, sur des coussins. Les promenades à travers les foules lui étaient devenues un supplice. Quand je l'obligeais à m'accompagner, il ne me suivait plus qu'à regret, tête basse, l'œil maussade, d'un pas lent et dolent. (Mirbeau, 2001 : 832)

Donc, la thématique de la ville de Paris et fort présente dans l'œuvre romanesque de Mirbeau. Et ce qui mérite d'être étudié, que ce soit par son originalité ou par sa persistance, c'est l'incommunicabilité, l'emprisonnement et le sentiment d'anonymat qu'éprouvent les personnages mirbelliens au sein de la foule maladive, dans cette ville tentaculaire qu'est Paris.

En effet, la ville pour Mirbeau n'est pas un simple arrière-plan ou un espace élémentaire et nécessaire pour l'intrigue. Au contraire, elle est un élément essentiel et un thème récurrent dans toute sa production romanesque. Une séquence descriptive d'une ville est chez lui une séquence narrative qui prépare quelque chose d'important au niveau de l'intrigue.

2. *Le Journal d'une femme de chambre* : une Belle Infidèle

Chaque œuvre littéraire a une essence, voire une quintessence. Le roman *Le journal d'une femme de chambre* a également la sienne. Octave Mirbeau le confirme : ce journal a une originalité, une saveur particulière (Mirbeau, 2001 : 379). De toute façon, le journal de Célestine n'est pas une œuvre compliquée, c'est un roman où il y a une chambrière, une camériste, une domestique relatant des histoires qu'elle a vécues chez ses maîtres et maîtresses, chez les bourgeois, chez ce que Pierre Michel appelle « la bêtise ventrue » (Mirbeau, 2001 : 366). Alors, quelles sont ces histoires ? Quelle est leur nature ? Comment la narratrice les raconte-t-elle ? Et pourquoi les raconte-t-elle ? Célestine, qui est la narratrice et le porte-parole de l'écrivain, dit : « Ce n'est pas de ma faute si les âmes, dont on arrache les voiles et qu'on montre à nu, exhalent une si forte odeur de pourriture » (Mirbeau, 2001 : 392). Donc, il s'agit d'une démystification, d'une démythification de la bourgeoisie de son époque. Et, quand on parle de la bourgeoisie, on parle forcément de tout ce qui concerne la société, y compris la religion, les traditions, l'institution de la famille et généralement les rapports interpersonnels.

Il est vrai que le cinéaste espagnol Louis Buñuel, en adaptant ce roman, a gardé un nombre important de ses éléments fondamentaux : le titre, les noms de la plupart des personnages, quelques lieux… Mais, les questions qui s'imposent sont les suivantes : est-ce qu'il a pu transmettre le même message que Mirbeau voulait transmettre ? Est-ce que Louis Buñuel a gardé la portée de l'œuvre ou bien l'a altérée ? Pourquoi le cinéaste a-t-il aboli un espace fort important pour le romancier, à savoir la ville de Paris ? C'est en répondant à toutes ces interrogations que nous montrerons que le film de Buñuel n'a que quelques points communs avec le roman de Mirbeau et que ce film est une Belle-Infidèle.

a) Une histoire dégénérée

Il est indéniable que l'adaptation est la création d'une autre œuvre, mais il faut quand même garder les ingrédients fondamentaux de l'œuvre source. Dépouiller l'œuvre de son âme, c'est la banaliser et c'est exactement ce que Louis Buñuel a fait dans l'adaptation de ce roman. Pour montrer l'impact de cette adaptation sur l'œuvre originelle, nous citons quelques modifications majeures qui ont contribué d'une manière ou d'une autre à altérer la pensée de l'écrivain.

La première modification que nous avons notée, c'est le nombre de postes que Célestine a occupés dans le roman et leur nombre dans le film. Le cinéaste espagnol a supprimé une quantité d'épisodes essentiels et en a amalgamé d'autres, ce qui altère singulièrement la signification de l'œuvre. Dans le roman, Célestine raconte une vingtaine d'histoires qu'elle a vécues pendant les sept dernières années, alors que dans le film il n'y en a qu'une. Mirbeau voulait critiquer la bourgeoisie de son époque et les différents exemples dans son roman sont quand même représentatifs, alors que dans le film on a l'impression qu'il s'agit d'une critique de la famille Lanlaire rebaptisée Monteil et non pas de toute une couche de la société (à savoir la bourgeoisie). Même le changement du nom de cette famille n'est pas justifié sachant que le nom Lanlaire est porteur de sens péjoratif : « Va-te-faire Lanlaire... » dit Célestine.

Le deuxième changement concerne le temps de l'action. Louis Buñuel a déplacé de trente ans la date de l'action, ce qui en modifie la perspective historique. Personne ne peut concevoir *Le Journal d'une femme de chambre* loin de l'Affaire Dreyfus, affaire qui a bouleversé le climat politique français et même européen au début du siècle dernier. Mirbeau, le justicier (Herzfeld, 2008 : 121), s'est placé au côté des dreyfusards, et a même payé toute l'amende que Zola devait à l'Etat à cause de la publication de son *J'accuse* (Zola, 1998). En décalant le temps de l'intrigue et en effaçant cet incident historique fort important, Buñuel détache l'œuvre de son temps et lui ôte toute sa perspective historique.

La troisième modification que nous avons détectée réside dans le fait que Buñuel s'est cru autorisé à bouleverser complètement le dénouement. Le cinéaste espagnol imagine même une union, inconcevable pour le romancier, entre la chambrière des Lanlaire et leur voisin, le « grotesque et le sinistre fantoche » (Mirbeau 2002 : 443), qui est le capitaine Mauger. Buñuel a donc bel et bien trahi l'esprit du roman, et a banalisé la perspective du romancier.

Nous ajoutons une dernière remarque toute en notant la possibilité de repérer d'autres modifications que ce soit au niveau de l'intrigue de l'attitude des personnages, etc. À la différence de Mirbeau, Buñuel a fait de Célestine une justicière soucieuse de piéger et de faire arrêter l'assassin Joseph. Chez Mirbeau, cette chambrière est au contraire fascinée par un violeur et n'hésite pas à dire qu'elle est prête à le suivre « jusqu'au crime » (Mirbeau, 2002 : 667). Célestine dans le roman est une femme pervertie « vicieuse jusqu'à la moelle » (Mirbeau 2002 : 570), elle a épousé Joseph, celui qui a volé, violé et tué une petite fille de dix ans alors que dans le film elle est justicière et presque une dévote. Il fallait dire à Buñuel que Mirbeau

n'est pas un humaniste. Il est dans le sillage de Nietzsche et de Schopenhauer, il est convaincu corps et âme que l'homme est méchant par nature. La gentillesse chez l'homme n'est qu'un masque ou une crainte des lois, de la religion, de la société…

b) Un espace négligé

Nous avons déjà expliqué l'importance du thème de la ville en général et de la ville de Paris en particulier dans les romans de Mirbeau. Dans le film de Buñuel, l'espace est réduit et la ville de Paris est effacée. Cette négligence ou ce choix n'est pas expliqué(e). Dans le roman, Célestine a travaillé dans une vingtaine de maisons à Paris et une seule place dans la province. Louis Buñuel s'est contenté dans son film de la province comme si Paris dans le roman n'a aucun rôle. La ville de Paris est présente dans tous les romans de Mirbeau. Mirbeau la décrit toujours comme un monstre, un espace qui fait peur. Dans le journal de Célestine, Paris est un milieu dangereux, c'est un espace de déshumanisation sociale : « Une paysanne égarée dans Paris, dans ce Paris effrayant qui sans cesse se bouscule et est emporté dans une fièvre mauvaise, je ne connais rien de plus lamentable » (Mirbeau, 2002 : 605). Cependant, *Le journal d'une femme de chambre* est le seul roman où Paris est décrit comme un lieu d'attirance, de fascination : « J'aime beaucoup les Parisiennes... Elles savent ce que c'est que de vivre... » (Mirbeau, 2002 : 512). Célestine ne supporte plus le poids de l'ennui et rêve de revenir à Paris : « de m'arracher de mon enfer, de me trouver, à Paris, une place quelconque, si humble soit-elle… » (Mirbeau, 2002 : 434). Ce sentiment est dû à la surabondance et l'extravagance de la vie à Paris avec sa vitesse et ses excès, par contre dans la paroisse il n'y a « pas de flafla, de tentures lourdes, de choses brodées, comme on en voit dans certaines maisons de Paris » (Mirbeau, 2002 : 611). La chambrière s'est accoutumée au rythme de sa vie infernale à Paris, où il y avait beaucoup de choses à faire à tel point qu'elle n'avait pas le temps de s'occuper d'elle-même : « À Paris, il est difficile de se soigner. On n'a le temps de rien. La vie y est trop fiévreuse, trop tumultueuse... on y est, sans cesse, en contact avec trop de gens, trop de choses, trop de plaisirs, trop d'imprévu... » (Mirbeau, 2002 : 345). Pour elle, les dames de la paroisse sont moins élégantes que celles de Paris : « Madame, non plus, n'est pas habillée comme à Paris. Elle manque de chic et ignore les grandes couturières... » (Mirbeau, 2002 : 634). Le résultat, c'est que Célestine se sent trop ennuyée et cherche constamment le moment de quitter le Prieuré pour rejoindre son milieu favori : « J'entendais Paris respirer et vivre autour de moi… Son haleine m'emplissait le cœur de désirs nouveaux » (Mirbeau, 2002 : 589).

De ce qui précède, nous pouvons déduire que dans *Le Journal d'une femme de chambre*, Paris occupe une place centrale. Ce constat nous mène à nous interroger sur les raisons de l'abolition de cet espace dans le film de Buñuel. Cette absence aurait eu ? Un impact négatif sur la portée de l'œuvre et la pensée de l'écrivain. Ce dernier nous présente un tas de personnages attirés par la ville de Paris qui, pour lui, est toujours un espace corrompu sachant que particulièrement dans ce roman tous les personnages sont pervertis.

Au terme de cette analyse, il est indéniable que lorsque le cinéaste prend la décision de transformer une histoire écrite sur le papier en une histoire qui sera projetée sur l'écran, il a une grande marge de liberté puisqu'il s'agit d'une adaptation. Le mot *adaptation* veut dire arrangement, c'est-à-dire rendre les choses plus adéquates et commodes. Or, il y a des œuvres littéraires dans lesquelles l'histoire est symbolique, voire métaphorique. Célestine dans *Le Journal d'une femme de chambre* symbolise la méchanceté féminine et le fait de vendre sa chair pour garantir sa substance quotidienne. Elle n'est qu'un symbole d'une période de la vie de l'écrivain pendant laquelle il s'est livré à un travail dégoûtant, à savoir la négritude, sachant que notre

romancier, pour gagner sa substance quotidienne, il était obligé d'écrire au nom d'autres personnes des articles, des nouvelles et même des romans.

De ce fait, Luis Buñuel aurait dû garder la substance significative, historique et philosophique de l'œuvre car elle constitue l'âme du *Journal d'une femme de chambre*. Transformer Célestine en une femme de principe qui cherche à rendre justice à la défunte Claire est pour l'écrivain quelque chose d'inconcevable. En effet, pour beaucoup de gens qui, en regardant le film, croient comprendre le roman de Mirbeau, ou qui pensent que Luis Buñuel a gardé l'essentiel de l'ouvrage source, nous affirmons qu'il s'agit de deux œuvres bien distinctes. Cette adaptation est une Belle-Infidèle, pour reprendre l'expression de Georges Mounin. Certes, en regardant le film de Buñuel, Octave Mirbeau n'eût certainement pas reconnu son enfant.

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Trop tard : littérature et cinéma au travers de Lampedusa, Visconti, Deleuze, Nietzsche et quelques autres

Too Late: Literature and Cinema through Lampedusa, Visconti, Deleuze, Nietzsche and Others

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Le propos développé ici consiste à analyser l'adaptation par Visconti du roman *Le Guépard* de Lampedusa. Il nous a semblé que l'un des points d'approche du texte reposait sur le rapport au temps qui se développerait sur la dimension du *trop tard*. On montre que le philosophe Gilles Deleuze a été attentif à cet aspect et l'a constitué comme une dimension fondamentale du cinéma de Visconti (dans son ouvrage *Cinéma 2, L'image-temps*). Si on accepte cette interprétation, on peut être amené à rebours à montrer comment elle fonctionne dans le roman de Lampedusa.

Nous avons essayé dans cette mesure de montrer comment cette dimension du *trop tard* apparaissait comme centrale dans l'œuvre *Le Guépard*, soit sous sa forme de livre, soit sur celle de film. Gilles Deleuze apparaît alors comme ce philosophe qui permet de cerner cette jonction entre le roman et le film au travers de ses interrogations sur ces deux arts.

Mots-clés

***Le Guépard* ; trop tard ; vérité ; noblesse ; effondrement.**

The aim of this article is to analyze Visconti's adaptation of Lampedusa's novel *The Leopard*. It seems to us that one of the fruitful ways to approach the text is to consider the relationship to time, which develops on the dimension of the *too late*. We shall attempt to show that philosopher Gilles Deleuze (in his work *Cinéma 2, L'image-temps*) was attentive to this aspect, and identified it as a fundamental dimension of Visconti's cinema. If we accept this interpretation, we may be led backwards to show how it functions in Lampedusa's novel.

To this extent, we have tried to show how this dimension of the *too late* appears to be central to *The Leopard*, in its both book and film form. Gilles Deleuze then appears as the philosopher who, having questioned literature and cinema, makes it possible to identify this junction between novel and film.

Keywords

***The Leopard*; too late; truth; nobility; collapse**

En 1963, le jury du festival de Cannes octroya la Palme d'Or au film de Luchino Visconti : *Le Guépard*. Il s'agissait d'une adaptation d'un écrit de Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa publié une année plus tôt. Lampedusa, mort en 1957, ne put donner son avis sur l'adaptation de son unique roman.

Car il s'agissait bien d'une adaptation. Celle-ci fut extrêmement fidèle sur bien des points, mais peut-être discutable sur d'autres. Visconti, qui est célébré d'ordinaire comme un des maîtres du septième art, avait choisi d'adapter un texte extrêmement soigné et dont le sens est relativement simple à comprendre dans les grandes lignes : il s'agit de rendre compte de l'effondrement d'un monde, du remplacement de la noblesse, avec les valeurs qu'elle véhicule par une élite fortunée plébéienne. Ce thème est connu dans la littérature et par bien des aspects Calogero Sedara, le maire parvenu, immensément fortuné de Donnafugata fait penser au bourgeois gentilhomme de Molière. Mauvais goût, ignorance des coutumes, valeur exclusive à l'argent sont le lot de cette plèbe-là : dominante, mais parfaitement vulgaire. Et sur ce point précis qui est tout de même un élément important de la trame narrative, le film et le roman s'accordent en tout point. On pourra noter quelques différences dans la manière d'exposer la réalité. Ainsi, le roman peut affirmer que « Don Fabrice, brusquement sentait qu'il haïssait le maire » (Lampedusa, 1959 : 204), quand le film ne peut jamais que montrer cela par le jeu des acteurs qui laisse peut-être plus transparaître une forme de mépris amusé et lassé à la fois que de la haine. L'essentiel n'est pas là. Car ce qui nous intéresse sont les valeurs de l'autre camp : non celles de la classe plébéienne des parvenus qui monte, mais celles de la classe qui est menacée d'être renversée. Quelles valeurs porte-t-elle, cette noblesse ? Peut-être est-ce chez le philosophe allemand Friedrich Nietzsche que l'on peut le découvrir, quand celui-ci affirme que la noblesse c'est « tout cet "irrémédiable" intérieur de l'homme supérieur, cet éternel « trop tard » à tous les sens du terme » (2000 : 263). Justement ce thème du « trop tard » reste le problème principal du roman et du film. Or il ne trouve peut-être pas sa traduction de la même façon dans la littérature et le cinéma.

Les deux arts que sont la littérature et le cinéma ont tous les deux traité de la question temporelle, celle de la fuite du temps et de sa nature. Dans *Le Guépard* sous sa forme de roman chez Lampedusa ou dans sa traduction en film sous la direction de Visconti, le temps prend cette forme du « trop tard » pas simplement comme une de ses dimensions. Il nous semble que dans cette œuvre le « trop tard » n'est pas une simple possibilité d'expression du temps, mais sa nature même. Ceci enferme le message du film et du roman dans une sorte de fatalisme assez mélancolique qui apparaît comme une sorte de vérité des œuvres. Cela étant dit, il nous apparaît que les modalités d'expression du « trop tard » ne sont pas exactement les mêmes dans le cinéma et la littérature et c'est ce jeu de différence et d'identité entre les deux arts qui animera notre propos.

Nous montrerons ce que nous entendons ici par l'expression « trop tard » et selon quelles modalités elle s'inscrit dans le cinéma de Visconti et dans l'écriture de Lampedusa. Ceci nous amènera à voir comment cinéma et littérature se rejoignent et se distinguent au travers de ce que le philosophe Gilles Deleuze appelait, d'une part, « la recherche de la vérité » qui est à l'œuvre dans la littérature et, d'autre part, « la puissance du faux » à l'œuvre dans le cinéma, deux expressions qui, en dépit de leur apparente contradiction, pointent peut-être vers la même direction.

I. « Trop tard » et l'essence du temps

Comme nous l'avons signalé préalablement, le philosophe Nietzsche associait l'expression « trop tard » à une forme de noblesse, c'est-à-dire à une forme de commandement noble et altier des affaires du monde. Nietzsche soulignait que le « trop tard » se prend en de multiple sens. Essayons de cerner quelques-uns de ces sens. Le premier sens, le plus évident, c'est celui où l'on souhaite réaliser un projet, mais qu'on n'est pas parti à temps. La réussite de l'événement est compromise parce qu'on est parti trop tard. Il aurait fallu s'y prendre plus tôt. On n'a pas réussi à maîtriser le temps dans les projets que l'on a. Une certaine forme de passivité a détruit ce qu'on a voulu élaborer. On s'est laissé aspirer par les événements du monde extérieur au projet, au lieu de considérer le projet lui-même. Une chose n'a pas été prise en compte dans nos projets : c'est le temps qui passe irrémédiablement et qui, d'une manière ou d'une autre, a été perdu. Que le temps soit par essence quelque chose qui est perdu, c'est une sorte de lieu commun de la littérature et de la philosophie. On peut naturellement penser à l'œuvre de Marcel Proust dont le titre seul de l'ouvrage rappelle qu'on peut avoir des problèmes avec le temps. Mais on peut rappeler de manière plus simple que dès l'aurore de la poésie et de la pensée en Grèce antique, Hésiode nous présentait Chronos comme dévorant ses enfants. Et il est vrai que le temps dévore ses enfants. Ceux-ci partent toujours trop tard.

Ce thème du « trop tard » est central dans *Le Guépard* – le livre et le film. Dans le livre, on peut remarquer qu'il se joue à différents niveaux : d'abord le niveau des forces naturelles, ensuite celui du jeu de l'évolution familiale, ensuite au niveau social et historique. On peut remarquer qu'il y a une sorte d'isomorphisme du trop tard à chacun des niveaux. Le niveau des forces naturelles, les forces les plus sauvages, mais également les plus innocentes est illustré dans le roman par les scènes de chasse. Le prince chasse tous les matins et cette chasse montre comment l'innocente bête est prise au piège du chasseur parce qu'elle est simplement partie trop tard. On peut citer ce passage qui d'une certaine manière symbolise l'essentiel de l'action du roman :

> C'était un lapin des champs ; sa discrète casaque couleur de glaise n'avait pas réussi à le sauver. D'horribles éclats lui avaient lacéré le museau et la poitrine. Deux grands yeux noirs, rapidement envahis par une brume glauque, regardaient sans reproche Don Fabrice ; ils étaient pleins d'une douleur étonnée devant l'ordre des choses. Les oreilles veloutées étaient déjà froides, les vigoureuses petites pattes se contractaient rythmiquement, symbole par-delà la mort d'une fuite inutile : l'animal, comme tant d'hommes, mourait torturé par l'anxieuse espérance du salut, imaginant pouvoir s'en tirer encore quand il était perdu. (Lampedusa, 1959 : 95)

Parti trop tard, le lapin était condamné. Cependant il n'est pas le seul dans ce roman à subir la fatalité du temps qui passe trop vite. Le prince comprend également qu'il est pris dans le sombre jeu du temps et de son trop tard quand, cette fois au niveau familial, il voit sa fille Concetta en âge de se déclarer amoureuse : « Un homme de quarante-cinq ans peut se croire jeune jusqu'au moment où il découvre qu'il a des enfants en âge d'aimer » (65). Il est trop tard pour se croire jeune quand cela arrive et le temps a fini par le rattraper.

Cette expression du *trop tard* reste encore limitée à la sphère familiale. Ce n'est pas chez le prince qu'elle prend son tour le plus dramatique. C'est Concetta qui va souffrir toutes les désillusions de ce temps plein de méchanceté. Elle avait bien des raisons de croire en l'amour de Tancrède. Mais quand Angélique surgit, il est certainement trop tard. Du moins, le croit-elle.

Cela sera, d'une certaine manière, le drame du roman : « Tancrède, ces horreurs, on ne les dit qu'en confession ; on ne les raconte pas aux jeunes filles, à table tout au moins devant moi. Et elle lui tourna le dos » (78).

Cette manière de tourner le dos sera celle d'admettre qu'il est trop tard et celle de reconnaître que le mariage avec Angélique est irrémédiablement lancé. Elle ignore que son attitude aurait pu, aurait dû tout sauver. Cela également elle ne l'apprendra que trop tard. Après la mort de Tancrède, « l'inoubliable Tancrède » (244), le sénateur Tassoni donnera la vérité de cette histoire, de ce dîner qui avait été pour elle « le tournant de sa vie » (243). Tassoni raconte ainsi que Tancrède était tombé amoureux de Concetta du fait de sa réaction outrée à son incartade. C'est « cinquante ans » (245) plus tard que Concetta apprendra cette vérité. Ce jour-là, elle n'a pas su déchiffrer les signes et a vécu une vie sans rancœur, mais à regret.

Le drame du roman ne sera curieusement pas le drame du film. Le coup de théâtre du roman ne figure pas dans le film. Le film cesse avec la fin du bal. Il ne traite pas d'événements qui sont présents dans le roman. La mort du prince qui met fin à l'histoire millénaire des Salina est ainsi écartée. Le problème de l'interprétation de la vie de Concetta est bien différent dans le roman et dans le film. Le roman dévoile l'attirance de Tancrède pour Concetta quand le film n'en laisse rien percevoir. Pour Concetta le jour de sa défaite la plus amère aurait pu être celui de son triomphe. Le jour de sa défaite la plus amère aurait pu être celui de son triomphe. Cette découverte arrivée trop tard la fait « souffrir davantage » (246).

L'adaptation du roman de Lampedusa par Visconti constitue-t-elle une trahison de ce dernier ? Adapter, c'est traduire et, d'une certaine manière, toute traduction paraît être une trahison, selon l'expression consacrée. L'argument qui plaide en faveur de la trahison consiste à dire que le coup de théâtre final qui change le sens de l'histoire tout entière n'apparaît pas dans le film. Cet élément à charge semble accablant en un sens. Pourtant il ne nous apparaît pas décisif. Et nous dirons même qu'il est possible que l'adaptation de Visconti soit plus fidèle qu'une adaptation qui relaterait la révélation finale sans donner le cadre général de l'histoire où c'est la thématique du temps qui passe en tant qu'il est trop tard qui domine. Le roman de Lampedusa n'est pas une simple histoire d'amour où deux femmes, Angélique et Concetta, se battraient pour le séduisant Tancrède. D'une part, parce que les deux femmes ne se battent pas. Concetta reconnaît (sans doute un petit peu trop tôt) sa défaite. D'autre part, parce que l'objet du livre comme du film, c'est cette dimension du trop tard en tant qu'essence du temps. Car dans le roman, le trop tard ne concerne pas simplement les éléments naturels ou la vie familiale avec le mariage, mais il touche l'ensemble du monde avec sa dimension sociale. Le bal lui-même finit trop tard :

> Le bal continua longtemps encore, jusqu'à six heures du matin. Tout le monde était épuisé ; chacun aurait voulu être couché depuis au moins trois heures. Mais s'en aller trop vite, c'eût été proclamer que la fête n'était pas réussie et offenser les maîtres de la maison ; les pauvres s'étaient donné tant de peine. (215)

On part trop tard pour ne pas partir trop tôt, en somme. Simple question de bienséance sociale. Vient aussi la dimension politique et cosmologique. C'est le monde sicilien que nous présente Lampedusa par le personnage du prince. Quand Chevalley vient voir le prince Fabrice pour lui proposer de devenir sénateur, le prince lui rétorque que la proposition arrive trop tard :

> L'intention est bonne, Chevalley, mais tardive. Du reste je vous ai déjà dit que c'est pour une large part notre faute. Vous me parliez, il y a peu d'une jeune Sicile, à qui sont enfin offerte les merveilles du monde moderne : pour mon compte, je vois plutôt une centenaire, poussée dans une voiture d'infirme à travers l'exposition universelle de Londres, qui ne comprend rien, qui se soucie des aciéries de Sheffield ou des filatures de Manchester comme d'une guigne, et qui aspire seulement à retrouver son engourdissement, ses oreillers mouillés de bave et le pot de chambre sous son lit. (163-164).

Il ne s'agit pas ici d'une rancœur qui consisterait à dire : « vous auriez pu arriver plus vite ». Il s'agit simplement de constater qu'en Sicile le poids de la nature – « l'atmosphère, le climat, le paysages siciliens » (165) – fait que tout arrive trop tard.

C'est justement cette dimension du trop tard que Visconti est en mesure de retracer dans le film. Le film se meut dans l'élément du *trop tard*. C'est pour cette raison que le fim ne trahit pas le livre, mais reste fidèle à son élément fondamental.

Expliquons cela.

Gilles Deleuze, dans son livre *Cinéma 2, L'image-temps*, considère que le cinéma peut fournir des cristaux de temps. Il entend par là qu'avec le cinéma l'image se dédouble sans cesse en une image réelle, d'un côté, et une image virtuelle, de l'autre, qui se conserve cependant dans son irréalité. Ce dédoublement de l'image forme comme un cristal dans lequel le temps serait visible en tant que tel. Qu'est-ce que le temps dans ces conditions sinon une forme de dédoublement constant d'un présent en présent et passé qui lui est contemporain ? Deleuze souligne en référence à Bergson et son livre *Matière et mémoire* que le passé et le présent se créent en même temps, mais que passé et présent diffèrent en nature :

> Ce qui constitue l'image-cristal, c'est l'opération la plus fondamentale du temps : puisque le passé ne se constitue pas après le présent qu'il a été, mais en même temps, il faut que le temps se dédouble à chaque instant en présent et passé, qui diffèrent l'un de l'autre en nature, ou, ce qui revient au même, dédouble le présent en deux directions hétérogènes, dont l'une s'élance vers l'avenir et l'autre tombe dans le passé. Il faut que le temps se scinde en même temps qu'il se pose ou se déroule : il se scinde en deux jets dissymétriques dont l'un fait passer tout le présent, et dont l'autre conserve tout le passé. Le temps consiste dans cette scission, et c'est elle, c'est lui qu'on voit dans le cristal. L'image-cristal n'était pas le temps, mais on voit le temps dans le cristal. On voit dans le cristal la perpétuelle fondation du temps, le temps non-chronologique, Cronos et non pas Chronos. (1985 : 108-109)

Le cinéma apparaît comme l'art de la conservation et de la virtualisation de l'image. En tant que tel, il est l'art capable de créer des cristaux de temps. Et le temps est ce mystérieux dédoublement entre un passé qui se conserve et un présent qui ne cesse de s'écouler. Cette profession de foi d'un vicaire bergsonien[1] conduit Deleuze à s'intéresser à Visconti en qui il

[1] Nous ne discuterons ici ni de la pertinence de la lecture que Deleuze fait de Bergson, ni même des idées incongrues en apparence d'un passé qui se conserverait en soi et serait concomitant d'un présent tout en en différant en nature. Ces idées présupposées permettent seulement de comprendre pourquoi Deleuze s'intéresse tant au cinéma et pourquoi il peut voir dans *Le Guépard*

voit quelqu'un qui va décomposer le cristal autour d'un certain nombre d'éléments qu'il va détailler : « Le dernier état à considérer serait le cristal en décomposition. L'œuvre de Visconti en témoigne. Cette œuvre a atteint à sa perfection lorsque Visconti a su à la fois distinguer et faire jouer suivant des rapports variés quatre éléments fondamentaux qui le hantaient » (1985 : 124).

Les quatre éléments en question sont : 1) le monde aristocratique des riches 2) ce monde en tant qu'il se décompose 3) l'histoire 4) « l'idée ou plutôt la révélation que quelque chose vient trop tard » (Deleuze, 1985 : 126). On voit ici que la dimension du *trop tard* est décisive. Elle est enrobée par les trois autres éléments, mais reste fondamentale. Le rapport à l'aristocratie est central dans le film. Burt Lancaster incarne de façon magistrale le prince et Alain Delon reste un Tancrède très convaincant, incarnant à la fois l'homme nouveau et l'ancien. Selon la formule consacrée par l'ouvrage et le film : « si nous voulons que tout continue, il faudra d'abord que tout change. Est-ce clair ? » (Lampedusa, 1959 : 30). Dans le film l'apparition de Tancrède se fait au travers d'un miroir où le prince se regarde. Faut-il en conclure alors que les deux hommes sont interchangeables ? Le jeu du miroir, comme le fait remarquer Deleuze, est fondamental au cinéma. Il dit ainsi :

> Le cristal est expression. L'expression va du miroir au germe. C'est le même circuit qui passe par trois figures, l'actuel et le virtuel, le limpide et l'opaque, le germe et le milieu. En effet, d'une part le germe est l'image virtuelle qui va faire cristalliser un milieu actuellement amorphe ; mais d'autre part celui-ci doit avoir une structure virtuellement cristallisable, par rapport à laquelle le germe joue maintenant le rôle d'image actuelle. (1985 : 100)

Le jeu de miroir dans la scène ou Tancrède apparaît pour la première fois dans le film montre ce phénomène de cristallisation et en même temps de décomposition du cristal. Il faut certes que tout reste le même, mais en même temps il faut que tout change. Le prince Salina et Tancrède sont interchangeables en un sens. Mais dans le même temps ils ne sont pas les mêmes. La fascination de l'un pour l'autre est absolument réciproque, mais toujours teinté d'un regret : le prince sait qu'il est trop tard pour agir comme le fait Tancrède et Tancrède sait que les risques inconsidérés qu'il va prendre vont le plonger dans une solitude qui est celle d'une noblesse où l'on vit des moments uniques qui appartiennent à la singularité de la noblesse quand l'homme de la foule vit des moments partagés avec les autres hommes. La décomposition du cristal est le germe du nouveau monde. L'apparition du miroir dans la scène où le prince se rase et voit Tancrède apparaître dans le miroir montre sans doute une possibilité du cinéma qui est inaccessible par les mêmes moyens à la littérature. La virtualité du miroir où on filme une image qui n'est que visible et dépourvue de toute autre forme de matérialité conduit à montrer un monde où imaginaire et réel peinent à se dissocier. Cette impossibilité de dissocier les deux est une composante essentielle du *trop tard*. Il y a à la fois concomitance de la chose reflétée et de son image dans le miroir. Cependant il y a une forme de décalage qui rend obscure la différenciation du réel et de l'imaginaire. Tout se passe entre les hommes comme en un rêve. Tancrède rêve d'être le prince et le prince rêve d'être Tancrède. C'est cependant avec Angélique que cette dimension du trop tard trouve son point d'acmé. Deleuze note cette forme d'accomplissement du film dans la scène du bal :

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une œuvre, parmi maintes autres qui possède un intérêt sur l'image-temps : celle du cristal en tant que décomposition.

> Parmi les plus belles scènes du « Guépard » il y a celle où le vieux prince, ayant approuvé le mariage d'amour entre son neveu et la fille du nouveau riche, pour sauver ce qui peut être sauvé, reçoit dans une danse la révélation de la fille : leurs regards s'épousent, ils sont l'un pour l'autre, l'un à l'autre, tandis que le neveu est repoussé dans le fond, lui-même fasciné et annulé par la grandeur de ce couple, mais c'est trop tard pour le vieil homme comme pour la jeune fille. (1985 : 127)

Le trop tard apparaît ainsi comme une dimension complète du temps. L'essence du temps, c'est de se produire trop tard, ce qui conduit Deleuze à relier Visconti non à Lampedusa (auteur qu'il ne cite jamais), mais à Edgar Poe et son *nevermore* et à Proust. *Le Guépard* de Visconti est vu comme une traduction de Proust.

Le sujet du roman de Lampedusa comme du film de Visconti nous semble donc être le temps en tant que *trop tard*. De ce point de vue, il n'apparaît guère important que la littérature propose une histoire différente de celle du film. Si l'histoire du livre n'est pas une histoire d'amour, mais la mise en évidence d'une dimension du temps en tant que perdu, on peut considérer réussie l'adaptation de Visconti. Cependant, comme nous allons le montrer maintenant, ce rapport à la vérité ne s'opère pas tout à fait de la même façon dans le cinéma et dans la littérature. Il nous faut maintenant montrer les modalités de la mise en évidence de la vérité dans les deux cas.

II. Recherche de la vérité et puissance du faux

Parlant du *Guépard*, nous nous plaçons ici dans une optique deleuzienne. On nous dira que cela peut paraître abusif dans la mesure où Deleuze ne parle jamais de Lampedusa et étudie le film comme exemple dans son livre sur *l'image-temps*, pour traiter de ce qu'il appelle des cristaux de temps. Dans ces conditions, on pourrait dire qu'on ne voit pas comment lier littérature et cinéma. Si le rôle de la littérature, c'est de produire un scénario, alors on peut considérer que la littérature en tant que telle est abolie et est ravalée au rang de moyen du cinéma. Cette objection est naturellement valable. Toutefois elle est inappropriée, pour critiquer Gilles Deleuze qui voyait dans la littérature un art à part entière même si, à notre connaissance, il ne tenait pas Lampedusa pour un auteur digne d'une étude livresque.

Qu'est-ce que la littérature pour Gilles Deleuze ? Le philosophe a multiplié les études. Il a proposé entre autres exemples des analyses sur Michel Tournier, sur Samuel Beckett, sur Lewis Carroll dans la *Logique du sens*, sur Kafka dans le livre *Kafka pour une littérature mineure* et sur Proust dans *Proust et les signes*. Ce dernier livre nous intéressera particulièrement ici dans la mesure où Deleuze relie Visconti à Proust et que le cinéaste italien revendiquait également un lien fort avec l'écriture de la *Recherche du temps perdu*. Deleuze peut ainsi dire :

> On peut faire la liste des thèmes qui unissent Visconti à Proust : le monde cristallin des aristocrates ; sa décomposition interne ; l'Histoire vue de biais (l'affaire Dreyfus, la guerre de 14) ; le trop-tard du temps perdu, mais qui donne aussi bien l'unité de l'art ou le temps retrouvé ; les classes définies comme familles d'esprit plutôt que comme groupes sociaux... Bruno Villien a fait une analyse comparée très intéressante du projet de Visconti et de celui de Losey (scénario d'Harold Pinter) : *Cinématographe*, no 42, décembre 1978, p. 25-29. Pourtant, nous ne pouvons pas suivre cette analyse, parce qu'elle crédite Losey-Pinter d'une conscience du temps qui manquerait à Visconti, lequel donnerait de

> Proust une version presque naturaliste. Ce serait plutôt le contraire : Visconti est profondément un cinéaste du temps, tandis que le « naturalisme » propre à Losey l'amène à subordonner le temps à des mondes originaires et à leurs pulsions (nous avons essayé de le montrer précédemment). C'est un point de vue qui existe aussi chez Proust. (1985 : 128)

Littérature et cinéma semblent ainsi originairement liés dans une recherche de la vérité du monde comme vérité du temps. Mais ce n'est peut-être là qu'une illusion. C'est une illusion parce que la vérité qui est ici recherchée par la voie de la littérature n'est peut-être pas ce que le cinéma qui passe par ce que Deleuze appelle la « puissance du faux » atteint.

Pour développer ce sujet, on fera remarquer, en premier lieu, que Lampedusa propose dans son roman une recherche de la vérité. Concetta finit par connaître la vérité, même si cette vérité est immédiatement masquée. Comme le romancier lui-même le dit, à peine sait-on ce qui s'est passé qu'« une nouvelle pelleté de terre venait de recouvrir le tombeau de la vérité » (1959 : 248). Non pas que la méditation de Lampedusa atteigne les niveaux ontologiques de la *Recherche du temps perdu*, cependant il est certain que *Le Guépard* est à sa façon une recherche de la vérité des signes dans le courant fugace du monde, et qu'il mérite, à ce titre, une considération en tant que littérature et en tant que machine littéraire d'interprétation visant une essence et une vérité. Dans *Proust et les signes*, Deleuze dit que : « La Recherche du temps perdu, en fait, est une recherche de la vérité. Si elle s'appelle recherche du temps perdu, c'est seulement dans la mesure où la vérité a un rapport essentiel avec le temps » (1998 : 23).

Cette position fait de la littérature une entité tout à fait comparable à la philosophie, même si elle se distingue de cette dernière. La littérature est un antilogos. Elle porte néanmoins sur la vérité (ce qui la rapproche de la philosophie) utilisant d'autres moyens. Elle parvient ainsi à capter des essences qui sont des différences. Deleuze le signale de façon très énergique : « Qu'est-ce qu'une essence, telle qu'elle est révélée dans une œuvre d'art ? C'est une différence, la différence ultime et absolue » (1998 : 53). Une telle déclaration est paradoxale. Une différence, c'est le fait pour deux choses de ne pas être identiques. Ne pas être identique, c'est être plein d'une négativité. Or quand on veut penser l'essence d'une chose, on veut la penser de façon positive : non pas dire de quoi elle est différente, mais dire ce qu'elle est en elle-même. Dire que l'essence est une différence, c'est dire quelque chose qui paraît intenable. Cependant, nous dit Deleuze, c'est précisément ce qui se passe avec la littérature. Et de ce point de vue la littérature s'oppose à la philosophie. Platon avait bien vu la difficulté dans *La République*, quand il déclarait dans le livre X qu'il fallait chasser les poètes de la cité. Le poète avait tendance, disait Socrate, à nous éloigner doublement de la vérité. Au contraire, le philosophe considérait l'essence comme une idée dans sa positivité et non pas comme un simple jeu de différences. Or justement ce que Deleuze met en évidence en lisant Proust, c'est que la saisie de l'essence, l'essence elle-même est indirecte. Pour Marcel Proust, c'est dans la métaphore que l'essence se manifeste. Citant *le Temps retrouvé*, Deleuze remarque :

> C'est en cela que consiste le style : « on peut faire se succéder indéfiniment dans une description les objets qui figuraient dans le lieu décrit, la vérité ne commencera qu'au moment où l'écrivain prendra deux objets différents, posera leur rapport analogue dans le monde de l'art, à celui qu'est le rapport unique de la loi causale dans le monde de la science, et les enfermera dans les anneaux nécessaires du beau style ». C'est dire que le style est essentiellement métaphore. Mais la métaphore est essentiellement

> métamorphose, et indique comment les objets échangent leur détermination, échange même le nom qui les désigne, dans le milieu nouveau qui leur confère la qualité commune (1998 : 61).

Cela signifie de ce fait que la recherche de la vérité est intimement liée au style de l'écrivain, style qui n'est pas une activité subjective, mais une essence.

Après cette digression, on pourra demander naturellement si ces analyses de Deleuze au sujet de Proust ont une valeur pour *Le Guépard* de Lampedusa. La question est inévitable et difficile à traiter dans la mesure où si ce roman est une course contre le temps et une recherche du temps perdu, il ne met néanmoins pas en évidence une réflexion sur le style ou sur le jeu des métaphores en général, ce qui chez Proust n'est pas un simple acte théorique, mais une partie intégrante de l'histoire. Finalement, *La Recherche du temps perdu* ne raconte peut-être qu'une seule chose : comprendre comment un auteur de littérature en vient à proposer des métaphores et pourquoi il le fait. Or on ne trouve rien de tel chez Lampedusa. Du moins en apparence.

En apparence et non en réalité, en fait. Car le rôle de l'analogie est central dans le roman de Lampedusa. Nous avons vu précédemment comment les événements de la chasse symbolisent et métaphorisent le reste de l'histoire, par exemple. Chacun des événements racontés est une sorte d'éternel retour du même qui est, en même temps, un éternel retour de la différence. Il faudra que tout change pour que tout reste le même. La formule ne doit pas être comprise de manière philosophique comme une affirmation dialectique, mais plutôt comme un parti-pris littéraire. Capter l'essence de la Sicile comme prétend le faire le Prince Salina quand il parle à Chevalley, c'est comprendre que dans tout ce jeu des différences qu'on veut introduire (par exemple remplacer les Bourbons par la République ou donner l'autorité à un pouilleux comme Calogero Sedara, ce qui aurait été impensable auparavant) ne fait que perdurer cette essence de l'Ile, dont, remarque Deleuze, Visconti ne montre jamais la mer, tout comme Lampedusa d'ailleurs[2].

Si on considère que Lampedusa suit Proust dans sa conception de la littérature en tant que recherche de la vérité, on peut se demander si l'adaptation cinématographique de son roman par Visconti relève également de cette problématique. Plusieurs faits peuvent être notés pour répondre. D'une part, le film lui-même ne révèle pas la vérité de l'amour au moins possible de Tancrède pour Concetta. Non pas qu'il nie cette possibilité. Cependant n'en abordant pas même la question, aucun spectateur du film qui n'aurait pas lu le livre de Lampedusa, ce qui constitue probablement la majorité des gens, n'émettrait l'hypothèse que le déjeuner où la flamboyante Claudia Cardinale incarnant Angélique écoutait un message impudique d'Alain Delon incarnant Tancrède aurait pu voir une victoire possible de Concetta. Lucilla Morlacchi jouant Concetta fut moins mise en valeur que Claudia Cardinale (ce qui correspondait certainement au roman pour une part) avec l'absence de gros plan par exemple, ce qui conduisait à l'effacer. Rien dans le film ne laissait transparaître l'idée que cet effacement aurait pu être une victoire.

Le point important est que cette puissance du faux n'est pas extérieure au cinéma, mais investie en lui. C'est là une des thèses de Gilles Deleuze. Si la littérature de type recherche du temps perdu dont le roman de Lampedusa est un exemplaire est une recherche de la vérité, le

[2] Lampedusa parle cependant de la mer au moment de la mort du Prince. Mais l'action se situe alors à Naples. L'eau est peut-être associée à l'élément mortel et la Sicile ne mourra pas immédiatement.

cinéma en tant que compréhension des « cristaux de temps » passe nécessairement par la puissance du faux. Deleuze le dit en ces termes :

> La formation du cristal, la force du temps et la puissance du faux sont strictement complémentaires, et ne cessent de s'impliquer comme les nouvelles coordonnées de l'image. Il n'y a là nul jugement de valeur, car ce nouveau régime n'engendre pas moins que l'ancien ses formules toutes faites, ses recettes, ses applications laborieuses et vides, ses ratés, ses arbitraires, ses seconde-main qu'on nous présente comme des chefs-d'œuvre. Ce qui est intéressant, c'est le nouveau statut de l'image, ce nouveau type de description-narration en tant qu'il inspire d'abord de grands auteurs très différents. (1985 : 172-173)

Faut-il en conclure à une incompatibilité viscérale entre les deux arts ? On pourrait dire qu'au contraire ils se rejoignent. Le problème de la vérité se pose dans le film dans la scène du bal où Concetta se plaint que Tancrède a changé et qu'il n'aurait jamais accepté qu'on mette des déserteurs à mort par le passé. Tancrède – incarné par Alain Delon – répond impérieusement alors qu'il a toujours parlé ainsi (ce qui est tout à fait faux) et qu'il est toujours resté le même. Ce dernier point est discutable si on s'en tient à une logique de l'identité où moi = moi. Encore si comme le fait remarquer Gilles Deleuze (1985 : 199-200), on passe à une logique de l'identité qui dit avec Arthur Rimbaud que « Je est un autre », Tancrède reste bien le même : l'homme capable de saisir les occasions, appartenant à un monde passé, mais capable de comprendre et d'assimiler le monde à venir. Regardant Concetta et lui montant avec effronterie, il se fait artiste au sens que Deleuze donne à ce terme, c'est-à-dire non pas rapporteur d'une réalité préalable, mais créateur d'une vérité. La vérité est quelque chose qui doit être créée. Deleuze qui analyse cela en interprétant Nietzsche et les déclarations particulières de ce dernier concernant la « volonté de vérité » en vient à dire : « Ce que l'artiste est, c'est créateur de vérité, car la vérité n'a pas à être atteinte, trouvée ni reproduite, elle doit être créée » (1985 : 191).

Que faut-il comprendre ici ? Dire que la vérité est création, c'est dire qu'elle n'est pas adéquation avec une entité préexistante, mais surgissement lié à un travail créateur. Il n'est pas sûr que Deleuze ait regardé Visconti comme un cinéaste qui portait ce genre d'idée.

> La révolution néo-réaliste gardait encore référence à une forme du vrai, bien qu'elle la renouvelât profondément, et que certains auteurs s'en soient émancipés dans leur évolution (Fellini, et même Visconti). Mais la nouvelle vague rompait délibérément avec la forme du vrai pour y substituer des puissances de vie, des puissances cinématographiques estimées plus profondes. (1985 : 176-177)

Visconti apparaît ainsi comme un cinéaste limite. On fera remarquer deux thèmes où *Le Guépard* joue avec l'idée d'une puissance du faux. D'une part, dans tous les jeux de miroir et dans tous les face à face où les visages s'opposant les uns aux autres semblent et voudraient comme en un dialogue socratique parvenir à un accord et à une vérité et où finalement tout finit par s'effondrer.

Quand dans le film, le Prince se sépare de Chevalley pour lequel il a une grande estime d'avoir compris ce qu'il a compris, il y a au sens propre du terme une sorte de malentendu. Chevalley se retourne et dit qu'il n'entend plus le message du prince qui parle, mais trop tard, en délivrant un message que seule la nature peut entendre. Puissance du faux donc en tant que

non raccordement dans un dialogue. Ce qui nous amène au dernier point – celui des futurs contingents : quelle Sicile à venir ? Celle de l'Italie nouvelle ou celle ancestrale ? Deleuze pose cette question en montrant que ce problème au cœur du film est un problème de vérité :

> Cette crise éclate dès l'antiquité, dans le paradoxe des « futurs contingents ». S'il est vrai qu'une bataille navale peut avoir lieu demain, comment éviter l'une des deux conséquences suivantes : ou bien l'impossible procède du possible (puisque, si la bataille a lieu, il ne se peut plus qu'elle n'ait pas lieu), ou bien le passé n'est pas nécessairement vrai (puisqu'elle pouvait ne pas avoir lieu). Il est facile de traiter de sophisme ce paradoxe. Il n'en montre pas moins la difficulté de penser un rapport direct de la vérité avec la forme du temps, et nous condamne à cantonner le vrai loin de l'existant, dans l'éternel ou dans ce qui imite l'éternel. (1985 : 170)

Avec le film en question le futur se produit finalement trop tard et c'est finalement ce troptard qui constitue la vérité à la fois du livre et du film en question.

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De la pellicule à la page. Werner Herzog, écrivain du cinéma

From Filming to Writing. Werner Herzog, a Writer of Cinema

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Mots-clés

Littérature ; Septième art ; marche ; journal intime ; conditions de création ; improvisation ; rêve.

Werner Herzog est connu comme réalisateur allemand de documentaires et de fictions, mais il est aussi auteur de deux œuvres à lire comme des journaux intimes : *Sur le chemin des glaces* (1978) et *Conquête de l'inutile* (2004). Le premier retrace le périple parcouru à pied par son auteur quand il apprend la mort à venir de Lotte Eisner, mort qu'il tâche de conjurer par la marche et l'écriture ; le second est rédigé durant le tournage de *Fitzcarraldo* au cœur de la forêt amazonienne. Il s'agira, dans l'essai qui va suivre, de comprendre comment ces deux ouvrages peuvent se lire au prisme du cinéma, tout en restant des objets autonomes dans leur forme littéraire. Werner Herzog passe de la pellicule à la page, de la caméra au crayon, et s'improvise auteur tout en restant réalisateur. Bien loin d'un conflit entre deux médiums, c'est un trait d'union qu'il tisse subtilement en gardant à l'image et à la page l'empreinte de ses rêves les plus fous.

Keywords

Literature; Seventh Art; walking; private diary; creation conditions; improvisation; dream.

Werner Herzog is known as a German director of documentaries and fiction, but he is also the author of two works that can be read like diaries: *Of Walking in Ice* (1978) and *Conquest of the Useless* (2004). The former recounts the journey the author took on foot when he learned of Lotte Eisner's impending death, a death he tried to ward off by walking and writing; the latter was written during the filming of *Fitzcarraldo* in the heart of the Amazon rainforest. In the essay that follows we shall explore how these two works can be read through the lens of cinema, while remaining autonomous objects in their literary form. Werner Herzog moves from film to page, from the camera to the pencil, becoming a writer while remaining a director. It is not a chasm, but a hyphen between the two mediums that he subtly draws, leaving the imprint of his wildest dreams on both image and page.

Si une question devait présider à la réflexion qui va suivre, ce serait certainement la suivante : l'œuvre écrite d'un réalisateur ne peut-elle se lire qu'au prisme de son cinéma (ou du cinéma) ? Un canal secret lie-t-il sa main et son œil ? L'écriture et le regard ne peuvent-ils être pensés indépendamment l'un de l'autre ? C'est ce que nous avons cru, il y a longtemps, quand nous avons découvert les deux livres du cinéaste Werner Herzog, *Sur le chemin des glaces* (Herzog, 1978) et *Conquête de l'inutile* (Herzog, 2004). Il nous semblait alors qu'il fallait opérer un rapprochement entre le langage écrit de leur auteur et le langage cinématographique, comme si le métier de réalisateur de Werner Herzog devait nécessairement apparaître dans les livres qu'il avait écrits. Chaque fois que l'auteur évoquait « le défilement des maisons », nous croyions y lire (ou y voir ?) un travelling latéral ; de même, la moindre description manuscrite d'un objet isolé nous semblait être un gros plan ou un insert. Tous les mots rédigés par les soins de Herzog devenaient donc des images susceptibles d'être projetées sur un écran imaginaire, alors que l'écrivain les avait justement voués à la page, non à l'écran. Ne s'agit-il pas là d'une tentative de meurtre du verbe pour que l'image surgisse là où elle n'est précisément pas attendue ? Réduire l'écrivain au réalisateur qu'il est, n'est-ce pas lui refuser le statut d'écrivain ?

Ces questions se posent d'autant plus quand le livre écrit par le réalisateur ne traite pas de cinéma. Ainsi, dans *Sur le chemin des glaces*, il n'est pas question de cinéma. Disons que si cet ouvrage fait allusion au cinéma, c'est de manière implicite, puisqu'il s'agit d'un journal de voyage, non d'un journal de tournage. *Sur le chemin des glaces*, d'ailleurs, bien qu'il soit rédigé à la première personne du singulier, n'évoque presque pas le métier de réalisateur de Herzog. Pourtant, le doute subsiste. En réalité, il serait difficile d'attribuer à cette œuvre un véritable genre : ce n'est ni un scénario, ni une critique, ni un texte théorique, ni une analyse filmique, ni une novellisation d'un scénario projeté sur grand écran. *Sur le chemin des glaces* nous semble être une autre manière d'écrire sur le cinéma, mais encore faut-il en prendre conscience en acceptant d'effacer les images mentales qui naissent inévitablement sous nos yeux de lecteurs pour laisser l'écriture se révéler pleinement. C'est à cela que la réflexion qui va suivre s'engage : à travers ces deux livres de Werner Herzog, nous espérons laisser au cinéaste la part d'images qui est la sienne, mais aussi offrir à l'auteur ce qui lui revient.

Werner Herzog rédige *Sur le chemin des glaces* entre le 23 novembre et le 12 décembre 1974, lors d'un périple effectué à pied depuis Munich jusqu'à Paris, pèlerinage réalisé dans un but des plus incertains :

> Un ami parisien m'a téléphoné à la fin de novembre 1974. Il m'a dit que Lotte Eisner était très malade et allait sans doute mourir. J'ai répondu : cela ne se peut pas. Pas maintenant. Le cinéma allemand ne peut pas encore se passer d'elle, nous ne devons pas la laisser mourir. J'ai pris une veste, une boussole, un sac marin et les affaires indispensables. Mes bottes étaient tellement solides, tellement neuves, qu'elles m'inspiraient confiance. Je me mis en route pour Paris par le plus court chemin, avec la certitude qu'elle vivrait si j'allais à pied. Et puis, j'avais envie de me retrouver seul. (1978 : 7)

À cette époque, Herzog a réalisé quatorze films, longs et courts métrages, fictions et documentaires, dont *Fata Morgana* (1971) auquel la célèbre critique allemande Lotte Eisner a prêté sa voix. Mais Lotte Eisner est sur le point de mourir, et c'est au nom du cinéma qu'il faut la sauver. Dans un geste aussi inutile que désespéré, Herzog entreprend ce long voyage de sept

cent soixante-seize kilomètres comme pour conjurer l'inéluctable, non seulement par l'offrande d'un sacrifice du corps, mais aussi par l'écriture d'un journal dans lequel il décrit au jour le jour les paysages hivernaux qu'il franchit, les souvenirs qui lui reviennent, les pensées qui le traversent. Il faut écrire pour sauver le cinéma allemand, et pourtant, de cinéma allemand, il n'est pas tout à fait question dans cette œuvre. Ce qui accompagne majoritairement l'auteur de ce journal rédigé à la première personne, ce sont des paysages déserts et la solitude la plus écrasante, parfois ponctuée de brèves rencontres qui ne mèneront à aucune nouvelle relation, car seule Eisner existe désormais – à moins qu'elle ne soit d'ailleurs déjà morte. Et pourtant, de Lotte Eisner, il n'est presque jamais question : pas de souvenirs de franche amitié, de débats passionnés au sujet d'œuvres cinématographiques, pas d'évocations de textes critiques. Les rares souvenirs que note Werner Herzog dans son journal ne font que rehausser sa solitude du moment :

> J'ai fait la queue dehors devant une sorte de kiosque, au coin de la rue, je vois le kiosque, là, devant moi. J'attendais parce que je veux de la pellicule pour un long métrage. On était samedi, et il n'était pas loin de cinq heures. Les magasins n'allaient pas tarder à fermer, et je voulais tourner le film entier le dimanche. Il y avait tout ce qu'on voulait dans ce kiosque, jusqu'à de la réglisse. Soudain, à cinq heures pile, le gros type en col roulé qui tient la boutique baisse son rideau et ferme, juste devant mon nez, alors qu'il avait sûrement vu que je faisais la queue depuis une demi-heure. Il me faut pourtant toute sa réserve de boîtes de Kodak. (75-76)

La mémoire du passé s'imbrique dans l'instant présent (« je *vois* le kiosque ») – celui de l'écriture et du voyage – sans réelle transition : elle accompagne les descriptions des paysages froids, s'immisce dans une narration décousue qui ne suit rien d'autre que le fil des idées et celui de la plume. Ce geste d'écriture, pourtant, n'est pas des plus aisés : il advient dans un contexte froid, hostile, et lors des rares moments de pause de son auteur : « J'ai les doigts si glacés que je ne puis qu'écrire à grand peine » (99). La main partage avec le pied l'effort dans la tourmente, l'engourdissement qui freine le mouvement, et cet état d'urgence face à la mort à venir que l'on doit à tout prix empêcher. Le pied tremble « sur le chemin des glaces » tandis que la main parcourt péniblement la surface gelée d'un papier à protéger coûte que coûte des intempéries, bien qu'il ne soit alors que le fruit d'un désir pressant d'écriture sans être destiné à être publié un jour. C'est une rédaction par soi, pour soi, un reflet dans un lac gelé où l'image se brouille dans la buée d'une respiration saccadée due à l'effort de l'avancée : « Marcher ou écrire, le combat est le même, le salut aussi » (Herzog *et al.*, 2008 : 22).

À Hervé Aubron et Emmanuel Burdeau à qui il accorde un entretien, Werner Herzog révèle d'où viennent les ressorts qui sont ceux de son cinéma : « Avez-vous fait de longues marches ? Ce sont de telles expériences que viennent mes capacités de cinéaste » (2008 : 54). Herzog écrit dans les conditions mêmes où il filme : en marchant, en gravant sur une surface fine et fragile – éphémère, peut-être – le banal d'une existence et les rêves fantasmés d'une grandeur illusoire. Il en est ainsi, par exemple, quand il tourne *La Soufrière. L'attente d'une catastrophe inéluctable* (1977). Dans ce court métrage, le réalisateur filme les images brûlantes de La Soufrière, un volcan guadeloupéen, sur le point d'entrer en éruption et d'ensevelir la totalité de l'île sous sa lave. La ville de Basse-Terre, située à ses pieds, a été presque totalement évacuée, mais Herzog et deux de ses assistants ne peuvent laisser cet événement exceptionnel privé d'images. De longs travellings dans les rues désertes rendent compte de la désolation de la

ville abandonnée à son triste sort. Herzog interviewe quelques marginaux qui ont choisi de rester et se confient sur leur mort à venir avec sérénité. Pendant ce temps, le cratère gronde, des nuages noirs s'échappent de la cheminée volcanique prête à exploser. L'« inéluctable », pourtant, n'advint finalement jamais. Le volcan se rendormit aussi rapidement qu'il s'était éveillé, les habitants de Terre-Neuve revinrent peu à peu et la vie reprit son cours. Le cinéma ne put rendre compte de la catastrophe, et Herzog, philosophe, de conclure son film : « Maintenant, ce sera un documentaire sur une catastrophe inévitable… qui n'a jamais eu lieu ».

Autre catastrophe inéluctable que celle de la mort à venir de Lotte Eisner. Autre catastrophe à éviter, non par le tournage d'images, mais par la mise à l'écrit d'impressions fugitives, de descriptions de décors à peine entrevus que la marche dissout pour laisser place à d'autres qui s'évanouiront à leur tour. Et, de la même manière que La Soufrière n'explosa jamais, Lotte Eisner ne mourut pas. La prouesse physique et l'écriture de Herzog lui accordèrent une résurrection et un sursis de neuf ans. La catastrophe inévitable n'eut pas lieu, et le cinéma allemand, qui ne pouvait se passer d'elle, put jouir ces neuf années de la rémission de celle qui écrivait pour lui.

Alors, certes, *Sur le chemin des glaces* n'est pas un journal de tournage, ni un recueil d'anecdotes de réalisateur, ni un précis d'analyse filmique, ni un scénario. Mais il est le sacrifice d'un homme qui déposa sur l'autel de l'art son offrande pour que survivent non seulement Lotte Eisner, mais aussi le cinéma allemand. C'est un livre écrit par un cinéaste, pour le cinéma, par amour du cinéma, et si cette œuvre ne peut se penser en termes cinématographiques – pour la bonne et simple raison que ce n'est pas là son langage –, elle porte en elle l'empreinte d'une pellicule à l'arrêt qui ne demande qu'à reprendre son défilement quand le sort jeté à Lotte Eisner sera rompu. D'un coup de crayon, Herzog en anéantit les effets, et les images du cinéma allemand peuvent à nouveau se succéder dans le prolongement inépuisable de ces quelques pages griffonnées.

Sur le chemin des glaces se donne à lire comme un journal de voyage, mais ce serait le réduire au rang de carnet de bord, alors que sa dimension intimiste transfigure l'œuvre en elle-même. *Conquête de l'inutile* (Herzog, 2004) s'offre de la même manière au lecteur ; le journal de tournage de *Fitzcarraldo* (1982) sert de prétexte à l'épanchement d'une âme et décompose sur plus de trois cents pages les images nébuleuses d'un rêve éveillé :

> Tel un chien fou qui s'est acharné sur la patte d'un chevreuil abattu et continue de secouer et de déchiqueter le gibier sans vie à tel point que le chasseur renonce à le calmer, une vision s'était emparée de moi : l'image d'un grand bateau à vapeur sur une montagne – le bateau sous la vapeur, utilisant sa propre force pour passer un versant pentu à travers la jungle, dans une nature qui anéantit les faibles comme les forts ; et la voix de Caruso, qui fait taire toutes les souffrances et tous les cris des animaux de la forêt vierge et arrête le chant des oiseaux. Plus exactement : le cri des oiseaux. Car dans le paysage inachevé, que Dieu dans sa colère a abandonné, les oiseaux ne chantent pas : ils crient de douleur, s'enfoncent, partout où le regard se porte, comme des géants luttant les uns contre les autres, dans la vapeur d'une Création, qui, ici, n'est pas achevée. Crachant du brouillard et épuisés, ils se tiennent là, dans ce monde irréel, dans une misère irréelle et moi, comme dans la stanza d'un poème écrit dans une langue étrangère que je ne comprends pas, je me sens profondément effrayé. (Herzog, 2004 : 13)

Pour que ces images passent de la page à l'écran de cinéma, Herzog troque son stylo contre une caméra capable d'enregistrer les images de son songe. Mais ce geste s'avère impuissant. La caméra seule ne suffit pas à rendre compte du rêve dans sa totalité, et le choix n'est plus permis : il faut s'armer des deux, du crayon et de la caméra, pour que le rêve devienne, à défaut d'une réalité, une représentation possible de cette réalité. Du 16 juin 1979 au 4 novembre 1981, Werner Herzog décrit les dures conditions de tournage de *Fitzcarraldo* en pleine forêt amazonienne, les maladies qui affectent son équipe technique, les crises de fureur de Klaus Kinski dont la mégalomanie oblige tous les acteurs présents et la caméra à garder leurs yeux et objectif braquer sur lui. Les sensations, impressions et émotions de Werner Herzog s'enchaînent sans lien apparent, dans l'écoulement de l'encre d'un stylo intarissable qui lui permet toute liberté de ton :

> La rencontre avec les cinéastes a été épique cet après-midi. J'ai vu un mauvais film et mis mon cerveau en mode veille. Caracas donne l'impression d'être sur la voie de l'expansion économique. Des petits moustiques mal intentionnés me piquent les pieds. Il a beaucoup plu ce matin, les montagnes baignaient dans la brume, ça m'a fait du bien. Il ne faut pas faire confiance aux chauffeurs de taxi ici. Je n'ai pas mangé aujourd'hui. C'est justement *Signes de vie* qui passe dans la salle, les ouvreurs s'ennuient à l'entrée. Un couinement mélancolique s'échappe des arbres. Je croyais que c'étaient des oiseaux, des oiseaux de nuit, mais on m'a dit qu'il s'agissait en réalité de petites grenouilles habitant dans les arbres. (18)

Ces saynètes de vie, dans leur enchaînement, sont traitées de manière égale : toutes ont leur importance et méritent d'être notées le soir, dans l'intimité d'une hutte de fortune perdue au beau milieu de la forêt amazonienne. Contrairement aux bribes d'existence présentes dans *Sur le chemin des glaces*, elles sont décrites très longuement, pour la bonne et simple raison que *Sur le chemin des glaces* est rédigé tandis que Herzog marche, alors que *Conquête de l'inutile* est le reflet d'un homme qui stagne, attendant qu'enfin son bateau traverse les montagnes. Ce qui caractérise le tournage de *Fitzcarraldo* et, par extension, l'écriture de *Conquête de l'inutile*, c'est l'attente d'un fait extraordinaire qui n'en finit pas de poindre. Il faudra cinq mois et quatre jours de travail au beau milieu de pluies diluviennes et quarante-huit pages rédigées dans les mêmes conditions pour le bateau puisse franchir le mont déboisé et écrire l'acmé d'un scénario auquel personne ne croyait plus. Ces travaux d'écriture et de tournage posent aussi réflexion quant à leurs conditions de préservation et de conservation en milieu particulièrement hostile et humide. Ainsi certains morceaux de phrases inachevées ou non commencées laissent davantage à penser que les mots se sont évanouis sous la goutte de pluie ou dans l'humidité de l'air ambiant propre à détruire l'empreinte humaine quand celle-ci cherche à s'épanouir. Ainsi peut-on lire ce bref extrait daté des 19 et 21 février 1981 : « … plat, creux, comme en béton. Toujours imperturbable. Loué soit un arbre qui se rend à la raison avec moi, où... » (164). L'interprétation n'est plus de mise et s'échappe dans des points de suspension, suspension non d'un temps qui s'offre comme matière palpable, mais suspension d'un mot, d'une phrase, d'un sens qui, s'ils ont un jour existé, sont désormais morts à la page et au lecteur. La matière, le support même des images et des mots, se trouve affectée par un réel contre lequel Herzog et son équipe ne cessent de se cogner, pour reprendre des termes lacaniens. Et ce réel peut aussi bien contaminer ces matières dans un dessein de détérioration que les investir de sa présence au

moment où on ne l'attend pas. Ainsi un serpent s'invite-t-il sur le plateau de tournage de *Fitzcarraldo*, devant la caméra, et sur la surface de la page que rédige Herzog :

> Les Campas étaient dissipés, hier, sur le tournage et visaient quelque chose qui se trouvait sur la côte avec leurs flèches. J'y suis allé et j'ai vu qu'ils avaient tiré sur un serpent, cloué au sol par des flèches qu'il mordait. Nous avons filmé ça rapidement et nous avons repris le travail quand l'animal est mort. (201)

La pause dans le tournage d'images et la pause dans l'écriture s'expriment de la même manière : par le tournage d'autres images et l'écriture d'autres phrases qui s'immiscent sans lien de causalité dans leurs médiums respectifs. Ces nouvelles images et autres mots, extraits d'un réel qui cherche son double dans l'empreinte sur la pellicule et la page, naissent d'un désir de l'illimité et de l'absence de frontières. Il n'y a pas de hiérarchie dans la littérature ou dans le cinéma de Herzog : il n'y a que des images et des mots qui tracent leur chemin à la suite d'autres images et mots, car tant que la matière se donne comme surface d'accueil, elle peut être investie d'images et de mots. C'est là, au fond, la seule vocation de la matière, qu'elle soit littéraire ou picturale : accueillir en son sein le verbe, la représentation, pour que l'art, grâce à elle, subsiste et persiste.

Les derniers plans de *Aguirre la colère de Dieu* (1972), en cela, sont particulièrement éloquents : Lope de Aguirre (Klaus Kinski), seul survivant de son expédition, reste stoïquement débout sur le radeau qui lui sert de navire flottant tant bien que mal à la surface des eaux amazoniennes. La caméra, portée de toute évidence à bord d'une vedette, filme le protagoniste en tournant autour de son frêle esquif. L'objectif, en plus de l'image de Aguirre, enregistre la trace évanescente du sillage éphémère creusé par le mouvement de la vedette portant la caméra, brisant un quatrième mur qui n'existe en réalité presque pas dans le cinéma de Herzog. Nous pourrions ergoter longuement sur la mise en abyme des conditions de tournage et d'écriture des œuvres herzoguiennes, mais ce n'est pas là ce qui intéresse l'auteur allemand. Son désir s'oriente moins vers le dévoilement de techniques de production que vers l'accueil, sans limites ni frontières, là encore, de tout ce qui advient sous la pointe de la plume ou derrière l'objectif de la caméra : « Tournage tôt le matin, avec des centaines d'Indiens. Les choses ont toujours l'air plus vraies lorsqu'elles n'ont pas été répétées ; ainsi, comme je le dis toujours, un mécanisme survient au moment de la prise, qui n'a pas de rapport avec la vie réelle » (2004 : 212).

L'improvisation, le hasard, l'inattendu, l'inespéré peut-être, s'invitent au sein du tout écrit, du très composé, du pensé et réfléchi. Contrairement à ce que l'on pourrait imaginer, ils ne font pas tache : ils comblent, par leur présence, un vide possible de la matière ne serait-ce que dans sa vocation. Ce qui aurait dû rester au néant, à l'informe, trouve dans la disponibilité de la matière un moment d'épanouissement et de figuration. Werner Herzog, dans *Conquête de l'inutile*, décrit les éclats de colère de Kinski qui ponctuent le tournage sans limites, eux aussi :

> Je me tenais tel un roc silencieux au milieu des hurlements et des vociférations de K., qui perturbait tout notre travail, et je le laissais s'enflammer. En fin de compte, c'était le prix à payer pour ce que l'on devait voir à l'écran, la seule vérité et la seule matérialité, car ce qui le met en rage a acquis une forme, finalement. (266)

Ce « prix à payer » relève non seulement du cinéma, mais aussi de l'écriture : les crises de Kinski sont matières en elles-mêmes, et servent *Fitzcarraldo*, *Ennemis intimes* (1999) et *Conquête de l'inutile*, de la même manière qu'elles servirent et serviront *Aguirre la colère de Dieu*, *Nosferatu, fantôme de la nuit* (1979), *Woyzeck* (1979) et *Cobra Verde* (1987). Toute éruption volcanique ou hystérique, qu'elle soit inachevée ou non, participe par sa violence à la composition de l'œuvre d'art littéraire ou filmique. Il faut laisser place à la violence, celle de la jungle, celle des conditions de tournage et d'écriture, sans chercher la facilité d'une mise en scène ou mise en texte qui ne servirait ni l'image ni les mots. Ainsi Werner Herzog annote-t-il le compte rendu de son rendez-vous avec les producteurs américains des 19 et 20 juin 1979 :

> L'étage des chefs de la 20th Century Fox. Il semblerait qu'il n'y ait eu aucun contact entre Gaumont, les Français, et la Fox. Pour eux il allait en outre de soi qu'on traînerait une maquette de plastique sur un décor de colline, dans un jardin botanique du coin peut-être, ou pourquoi pas à San Diego, où on trouve des serres restituant de « bonnes » conditions tropicales, puis ajouté qu'il était inutile de discuter : il faut un vrai bateau à vapeur gravissant une vraie montagne, non par amour du réalisme, mais par refus du style « opérette ». (17)

Ce refus du style « opérette », c'est celui de la reconstitution de décors, lesquels seraient davantage du côté du théâtre. La nature offre déjà à Herzog le décor de son visage, inutile de chercher à représenter ce qui est déjà présent au monde. Cette existence, seuls la caméra et le crayon peuvent en rendre pleinement compte, l'une par l'objectivité qui est sienne (Bazin, 1958 : 9-17), l'autre en servant d'intermédiaire entre la subjectivité de son auteur et la virginité de la page blanche qui ne demande qu'à être comblée. C'est la raison pour laquelle il faut un « vrai » bateau, une « vraie » montagne, et non une maquette qui s'érigerait comme symbole de la limite, de la frontière. Toute frontière, chez Herzog, doit être franchie, comme une montagne peut l'être par un navire. Et *Conquête de l'inutile*, de la même manière que *Sur le chemin des glaces*, est en quelque sorte une montagne à gravir : il faut que les mots s'enchaînent, l'un après l'autre, comme une marche qui s'effectuerait au long de centaines de pages. Et cesser de marcher, cesser d'écrire, cesser de tourner, c'est prendre le risque de l'absence d'empreintes et vouer au néant ce qu'il reste de traces. Toutes les images et tous les mots doivent survivre car ils furent un jour. Ainsi la caméra tourne-t-elle en permanence sur le tournage de *Fitzcarraldo*, et si toutes les images capturées du 6 janvier au 4 novembre 1981 ne figurent pas dans le film, c'est parce qu'elles sont vouées à alimenter une autre œuvre à venir, *Ennemis intimes* (1999), documentaire dans lequel Herzog décrit la relation amicalement tumultueuse et violente qu'il entretenait avec Klaus Kinski. Cette matière seconde demande à appartenir un jour à l'art, et la caméra ne peut refuser de capturer ces moments de réel que l'on aurait volontiers relégués dans l'obscurité des coulisses.

Les écrits de Herzog eux-mêmes se dévoilent. Rédigés par leur auteur dans la plus stricte intimité et pour rester cachés des lecteurs, ils finissent par investir le champ littéraire quand Herzog réalise qu'ils demandent en réalité à être partagés :

> […] *Conquête de l'inutile* […] est supérieur à mes films. *Conquête de l'inutile* survivra à tous mes films. J'en suis sûr. Les films ont de toute façon une durée de vie limitée. Les gens doivent bien comprendre que ce livre est une œuvre de prose, un rêve ou un délire en état de fièvre. *A fever dream. A fever delirious.* Ce n'est pas un journal de tournage. Seule la

> structure extérieure en adopte la forme et le ton. C'est un texte purement littéraire déguisé en journal de bord. À l'origine, c'était bien sûr un journal, mais seule une toute petite partie de ce qui y est écrit est tiré d'événements effectivement survenus au cours du tournage de *Fitzcarraldo* (1982). Je décris avant tout des événements intérieurs. Je le redis, c'est le rêve d'un homme qui a la fièvre. C'est un livre de catastrophes inventées. Comme si, pendant que je tournais *Fitzcarraldo*, j'écrivais de la poésie sur ce que c'est que vivre dans la jungle. (Herzog *et al.*, 2008 : 56)

Si Werner Herzog refuse à *Conquête de l'inutile* qu'il appartienne au genre du journal de bord ou du journal de tournage, c'est parce qu'il cherche à le dissocier tout à fait du film qu'il est en train de tourner au moment de son écriture. De la même manière, *Sur le chemin des glaces* n'est pas rattaché aux journaux de voyage. À certains égards, ces deux œuvres pourraient être considérées comme des journaux intimes, des confidents accueillant les impressions et sentiments de leur auteur. Pourtant, le cinéma ne peut tout à fait s'en dissocier, car c'est du cinéma que naissent ces deux livres : l'un en cherchant à éloigner la mort à venir du cinéma allemand, l'autre en surgissant de l'enregistrement d'images. Ce que propose Werner Herzog, à son insu peut-être, c'est une autre manière d'écrire sur et pour le cinéma, et ces deux œuvres échappent à toute catégorie littéraire par leur radicale nouveauté. Il y eut les scénarios, les critiques de films, les analyses filmiques, les essais théoriques sur le cinéma : il existe désormais les « livres de catastrophes inventées » dont la plume oscille entre fiction et documentaire, tremble sous l'effort de la marche ou la violence des intempéries, hésite entre l'annotation de faits réels et celle de paysages intérieurs. Véritables livres sur le cinéma, *Sur le chemin des glaces* et *Conquête de l'inutile* n'en sont pas moins des œuvres autonomes, émancipées du Septième Art tout en y restant paradoxalement radicalement attachées.

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Écrire le réel par le détail : La question de la *figure* chez Nathalie Sarraute et Robert Bresson

Writing the real through detail: The question of the *figura* in Nathalie Sarraute's and Robert Bresson's work

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Mots-clés

Nathalie Sarraute; Robert Bresson; *figure*; détail; fragmentation; Réel.

Bien que l'œuvre cinématographique de Robert Bresson et l'œuvre littéraire de Nathalie Sarraute semblent irréconciliables en termes thématiques et matériels, c'est précisément par une approche négative, par le biais de ce qu'ils rejettent, « la part excédentaire », « ce qui n'est pas encore assimilé » ni « directement figurable », qu'ils se rejoignent. Cet article explore les différentes déclinaisons du terme *figure*, à partir desquelles on aborde les écrits théoriques de Bresson et Sarraute, ainsi que leur travail artistique. La figure devient donc la matière à modeler physique – corporelle et gestuelle –, mais aussi matière stylistique – dont la forme peut être textuelle-discursive et filmique. Ainsi, l'esthétique du fragment et l'attention portée au détail des tableaux de Bresson et Sarraute, composés de morceaux d'instants qui dispersent le geste, les corps et le discours, dénarrativisent le récit et l'image, tout en les évinçant vers le hors-champ filmique et textuel, l'espace du Réel qui fait émerger la possibilité.

Keywords

Nathalie Sarraute; Robert Bresson; *figura*; detail; fragmentation; Real.

Although Robert Bresson's cinematic work and Nathalie Sarraute's literary work seem irreconcilable in thematic and material terms, it is precisely through a negative approach that they come together. In other words, they share what they reject –"the surplus", "what is not yet assimilated" nor "directly figurable". This essay will explore the various declensions of the term *figura*, in order to approach the theoretical writings of Bresson and Sarraute, as well as their artistic work. Thus, *figura* becomes the physical material for modelling – corporeal and gestural– but also the stylistic material – whose form can be textual-discursive and filmic. In this way, the aesthetics of the fragment and the attention paid to details of Bresson and Sarraute's tableaux – made up of pieces of gesture, bodies and discourse – denarrativize stories and images, while steering narration towards the filmic and textual *hors-champ*, the space of the Real that brings possibility to the surface.

Dans son ouvrage d'exil, *Figura*, Erich Auerbach suit la trace étymologique du terme qui inspire le titre. Le philologue allemand situe les deux premières citations du mot dans les écrits de Térence et Pacuvius comme *nova figura*, ce qui lui donne « le caractère particulier et persistant […] [repris au long de toute son histoire] de 'ce qui se manifeste encore' et 'ce qui se transforme' » (Auerbach, 1998 : 43). Issue de la famille de *fingere* – façonner –, Varron l'emploie pour la première fois en tant que « configuration externe » (45). Ainsi, le lien entre ces utilisations : transformation, moule et produit plastique, rapproche la figure de l'idée d'imitation et de copie. « Il est facile de supposer que dans le jeu entre le 'prototype originel' et la 'copie', entre la 'transformation de l'image' et l'imitation équivoque de la 'vision onirique', ont participé spécialement les poètes » (57), avance Auerbach en pensant à Catulle, Properce et Virgile, mais surtout à Ovide, dont l'emploi de « *figure* suggère quelque chose de dynamique, de transformable et d'exposée à l'équivoque » (59).

L'œuvre cinématographique de Robert Bresson et l'œuvre littéraire de Nathalie Sarraute (tous les deux, poètes de l'image) se rencontrent dans le paradigme de la figure, comprise dans la tension entre la rupture et la continuité. La figure comme image analogique, contenue dans le photogramme bressonnien et dans le discours sarrautien, devient l'unité de construction d'un monde où le réel brut et immédiat se mélange à l'invisible, ce qui reste caché, en latence. Se rejoignent ainsi la conception poétique du cinéaste et de l'autrice, dont les démarches suivent la capture des détails infimes dissociés de leur cadre : les tropismes de Sarraute, et les mouvements infrasensibles captés par la caméra de Bresson. Si, pour Sarraute, la poésie est « ce qui fait apparaître l'invisible » (Sarraute, 1996 : 1662), Bresson « s'exprime cinématographiquement comme un poète par la plume. Vaste est l'obstacle entre sa noblesse, son silence, son sérieux, ses rêves et tout un monde où ils passent pour de l'hésitation et de la manie » (Estève, 1983 : 9).

Sarraute emprunte le terme biologique *tropisme* dénotant le mouvement causé par un stimulus extérieur qui provoque soit une approche, soit un rejet, afin de désigner les mouvements « infrapsychologiques » (Sarraute, 1996 : 1719) qui permettent de sonder ce qui est caché au plus profond de nous-mêmes et des autres. Il s'agit des « mouvements indéfinissables, qui glissent très rapidement aux limites de notre conscience. […] Ils me paraissaient et me paraissent encore constituer la source secrète de notre existence » (1553-1554). Comme la sous-conversation à laquelle Sarraute ouvre son œuvre, la caméra bressonienne devient un catalyseur des mouvements infrasensibles par lesquels le réalisateur approche le réel. Sous la forme d'un aphorisme, Bresson écrit :

> Approche inhabituelle des corps.
> À l'affût des mouvements les plus insensibles, les plus intérieurs. (Bresson, 1988 : 43)

La voix intérieure, c'est-à-dire la matière linguistique qui, chez l'écrivaine, compose le flux de conscience, acquiert une dimension gestuelle chez Bresson. Ainsi, la figure considérée comme configuration externe à nature malléable façonne la poétique des personnages bressoniens et sarrautiens.

I. La figure comme modèle et forme

Dans ses *Notes sur le cinématographe*, Bresson rejette le terme « acteur », propre au cinéma, pour privilégier celui qui correspond au cinématographe, « modèle » (Bresson, 1988 : 46-47), dont l'étymologie est apparentée au terme *moule* de la figure – *modulus*. Le modèle de Bresson

incarne la négation de ce que représentent l'acteur et son jeu, un jeu toujours démuni d'*intentions* : « Supprime radicalement les *intentions* chez tes modèles » (22) et sous la contrainte de la négation : « Il ne s'agit pas de jouer 'simple', ou de jouer 'intérieur', mais de ne pas jouer du tout » (103). C'est par un travail intérieur que le modèle se libère de toute pensée pour arriver à l'automatisme demandé par le réalisateur, devenant ainsi une configuration externe : « Modèles devenus automatiques (tout pesé, mesuré, minuté, répété dix, vingt fois) et lâchés au milieu des événements de ton film, leurs rapports avec les personnes et les objets autour d'eux seront *justes*, parce qu'ils ne seront pas *pensés* » (22). Le geste mécanique du modèle constitue donc un abîme entre le spectateur et le personnage : la douleur, la désolation, la perte de repères sont des sentiments que l'on cherche sur les visages bressonniens, mais auxquels il nous est impossible d'accéder directement.

Par ailleurs, le geste du modèle est renforcé par celui du réalisateur lors du montage. Jean-Louis Provoyeur insiste sur la dénarrativisation chez Bresson : le récit expulsé du cinématographe, expliqué par l'image-temps deleuzienne, définie par Jacques Rancière comme celle qui « ruine la narration traditionnelle en expulsant toutes les formes convenues du rapport entre la situation narrative et l'expression émotionnelle, pour dégager des pures potentialités portées par les visages et les gestes » (Rancière, 2001 : 206).

L'œuvre théorique et fictionnelle de Sarraute est parcourue par la négation du personnage tel qu'il a été traditionnellement établi en littérature, ce qui le réduit – ou plutôt le complexifie – à la figure en tant que transformation (le personnage soumis aux mouvements tropismiques qui ressortent par la sous-conversation) et configuration externe (le personnage comme silhouette dépersonnifiée dont le corps agit de manière infraconsciente). Les *entités tropismiques* qui peuplent les textes de Sarraute errent sans une histoire ancrée dans un temps spécifique, elles flottent au-delà du cadre spatial qui les entoure, réduites au pronom personnel, dépouillées, enfin, de tous les oripeaux entourant le personnage en tant que tel dont « L'Ère du soupçon » constate la fin.

> [Le personnage] n'est plus aujourd'hui que l'ombre de lui-même. C'est à contrecœur que le romancier lui accorde tout ce qui peut le rendre trop facilement repérable […]. Même le nom dont il lui faut, de toute nécessité, l'affubler, est pour le romancier une gêne. (Sarraute, 1996 : 1584-1585)

Ainsi le personnage participe-t-il de la perte de l'action. Sarraute « elle-même [est] la première à reconnaître que, dans ses ouvrages, 'après les différentes phases par lesquelles on passe, tout se termine presque toujours par rien […] : qu'est-ce qu'il y a, qu'est-ce qui s'est passé ? Mais rien' » (Lee, 1996 : 11 ; Licari, 1985 : 13).

Sarraute présente le parti (adopté par plusieurs romanciers) de renoncer aux noms de ses personnages. Quelques-uns, comme Gide, ont fait appel à des patronymes hors du commun ; d'autres, à des initiales : Kafka a choisi le K. de l'auteur et Joyce, H. C. E. ; finalement, d'autres, comme elle-même, ont fait appel aux pronoms. L'*être tropismique* reste donc démuni non pas seulement d'un nom, mais de la cuirasse qui l'avait protégé autrefois : « les vieux accessoires inutiles » (Sarraute, 1996 : 1580), le caractère comme « étiquette grossière dont lui-même se ser[vait], sans trop y croire, pour la commodité pratique, pour régler, en très gros, ses conduites » (1581) et « l'intrigue qui, s'enroulant autour du personnage comme une bandelette, lui donn[ant] en même temps qu'une apparence de cohésion et de vie, la rigidité des momies » (1581).

Paradoxalement à la volonté de rendre visible l'imperceptible et perceptible ce qui ne peut pas être dit, il y a chez Bresson et Sarraute une volonté sous-jacente d'éloigner le personnage, dont il ne reste que la configuration externe, malléable et facile à façonner : la figure. Réduites au pronom et sans autre ancrage au-delà de l'immédiateté de leurs corps, rejetées à tout prix de la vue d'ensemble cinématographique, les figures qui errent dans l'univers de Sarraute et de Bresson constituent des corps qui ne peuvent être montrés qu'à partir de leurs fragments, sans possibilité de reconstitution, mais qui, à la façon des éclats, constituent le seul élément qui nous est révélé.

II. Figures du détail

L'univers bressonien se fonde sur l'art du détail issu de la possibilité technique offerte par le choix de l'objectif de la caméra : 50 mm, correspondant à la vision normale de l'œil humain. De cette condition matérielle, à la base des plans rapprochés qui composent des films tels que *Pickpocket* et *L'Argent*, se dégage une perception précise mais partielle de l'objet, qui perd son repère spatial, tout en restant isolé dans le cadre. Le niveau de perception auquel nous donne accès la caméra de Bresson fait de la synecdoque, notamment particularisante, une figure centrale dans la composition du corps fragmenté, dont on ne voit que la partie qui permet de saisir le tout. Ainsi, quoique peu spécifique et proche de la définition de trope, le sens étymologique de *synecdoque* renvoie à l'idée de rencontre simultanée dans la compréhension de ce qui n'est pas énoncé directement :

> Le terme grec *sunekdokhē* est dérivé du verbe *sun-ek-dékhomai* qui veut dire « recevoir ou accueillir ensemble » et, au figuré, « comprendre, saisir en même temps ». Il signifie « compréhension de plusieurs choses à la fois ; énonciation en termes implicites. » (Meyer, 1993 : 8)

De ce fait, l'attention portée aux mains dans *Pickpocket* et *L'Argent*, des mains qui *vont vers*…, révèle une approche synecdochique à double titre, en tant que représentation du corps contenu dans la partie (synecdoque de la partie pour le tout) ; et comme corps non implicite, c'est-à-dire dont on ne voit que le fragment, qui cherche la rencontre avec d'autres corps afin d'atteindre la *compréhension*. Dans *L'Argent*, les mains se rencontrent donc et partagent pour une fois et à égalité un même photogramme lors de la remise ou de l'échange de l'élément central qui donne le titre au film. Ainsi, l'esthétisation des gestes des mains dont les gros plans parcourent *L'Argent*, tout en accompagnant chacune des différentes étapes de la machine infernale de l'argent et notamment de la distribution des faux billets dont il est question, rappelle la délicatesse des scènes de vol et l'action fugitive du corps fragmenté :

> *Pickpocket* montre des actions (le vol), mais décomposées en gestes vus en plans rapprochés qui fragmentent les corps en parties autonomes : des jambes, des torses, des mains, des doigts. La métaphysique du mal n'est donc pas inscrite dans une dimension psychologique : elle est, tout comme le récit de Dostoïevski – symptomatiquement absente du générique – ce que le spectateur doit reconstituer de l'extérieur, un élargissement vertigineux de la fiction inversement proportionné à la restriction du champ visuel. (Provoyeur, 2003 : 103)

Les mains comme synecdoque particularisante du corps cherchent la communication avec l'autre, auquel il est, pourtant, impossible d'accéder autrement que par l'argent, l'intermédiaire au service duquel restent les figures du corps fragmenté. On n'atteint la chaleur de l'autre corps qu'à travers l'argent, sous le signe duquel se place le dernier film de Bresson : « Oh, argent, dieu visible, qu'est-ce que tu ne nous ferais pas faire[1] ? … », dit le compagnon de cellule du protagoniste.

Cet élan vers la rencontre subie par les personnages inscrit Bresson dans la lignée de créateurs inspirée par la plume de Dostoïevski, dont Sarraute réclame l'ascendance :

> C'est ce besoin continuel et presque maniaque de contact, d'une impossible et apaisante étreinte, qui tire tous ces personnages [de Dostoïevski] comme un vertige, les incite à tout moment à essayer par n'importe quel moyen de se frayer un chemin jusqu'à autrui, de pénétrer en lui le plus loin possible, de lui faire perdre son inquiétante, son insupportable opacité, et les pousse à s'ouvrir à lui à leur tour, à lui révéler leur plus secrets replis. (Sarraute, 1996 : 1568)

Impulsés par l'obsédante nécessité d'acceptation, les *corps sociaux* des personnages de Sarraute se construisent progressivement comme un modèle mimétique du discours établi par le groupe de pouvoir, dans la quête d'une homogénéité en forme de cuirasse, dont le geste excentrique, exagéré et presque parodique dévoile « les aspects cachés de la nature humaine » (Bakhtine, 1970 : 144).

Dans la quête de l'appartenance à une communauté dite « intellectuelle », le tropisme xi multiplie le nombre de références culturelles, littéraires et artistiques qui tracent le parcours de la protagoniste vers l'intellectualité. Pourtant, l'élévation de l'esprit passe par l'avilissement du corps, qui s'animalise par le travail des doigts, instruments de l'exercice matériel de (re)chercher et creuser :

> Sur tout cela se promenait, flairait partout, soulevait tout de ses doigts aux ongles carrés ; dès qu'on parlait vaguement quelque part de cela, son regard s'allumait elle tendait le cou avidement. […]
>
> Dans les recoins les plus secrets, dans les trésors les mieux dissimulés, elle fouillait de ses doigts avides. Toute « l'intellectualité ». Il la lui fallait. Pour elle. Pour elle, car elle savait maintenant le véritable prix des choses. Il lui fallait l'intellectualité (Sarraute, 1996 : 17)

La *recherche* du personnage se présente comme une métaphore de la chasse animale. Elle adopte les actions du prédateur *se promenant* toujours affamé (*avidement*) à l'affût de la trace de la proie (*flairait partout*, *soulevait*, *tendait le cou*). Les *doigts aux ongles carrés* constituent le vase communicant entre le sens figuré-énoncé de la chasse animale et le sens littéral-diégétique : la véritable quête intellectuelle qui a lieu parmi les livres. De ce fait, les doigts aux ongles carrés, tout comme la personnification *ses doigts avides*, constituent la synecdoque (partie-tout) qui engage la totalité de son corps et esprit, à savoir, elle, dans sa recherche.

Comme Bresson, Sarraute cartographie la main présentée dans ses différentes parties et associée à des gestes différents. Ainsi, la vie malaxée et pétrie du tropisme x, ou l'anatomie de

[1] Voir Robert Bresson, *L'Argent* (1983), 00:53:07-00:53:11.

l'instant qui concentre la main étouffée de l'enfant dans le tropisme viii. Pourtant, de la même façon que, chez Bresson, la rencontre des corps fragmentés permise par l'argent ne peut être que frustrante, les tropismes de Sarraute témoignent de la tragédie de l'impossibilité du contact, établi à partir du mensonge et du paraître, toujours de peur d'être « repouss[é] […] du revers de la main » (Sarraute, 1996 : 17). Impulsés par le même élan que les personnages de Dostoïevski, le vide résultant du contact dans *Tropismes* annonce celui des *Fruits d'or*, situé cette fois-ci parmi les intellectuels, les gens « de goût ». C'est ainsi qu'Arendt conclut son article dédié au roman de Sarraute, où, loin de rejoindre les autres (ces gens de « goût »), les sujets perpétuent le mensonge d'un monde partagé en apparence :

> Ce sentiment de parenté naturelle, au beau milieu d'un monde dans lequel nous sommes tous arrivés comme des étrangers, ce sentiment est monstrueusement faussé dans la société des 'raffinés' qui ont fabriqué, à partir du monde commun des objets, des mots de passe et des talismans, qui sont les moyens de l'organisation sociale. (Arendt, 1986 : 28)

Si les personnages de Sarraute restent isolés dans la farce sociale, les modèles et les personnages de Bresson restent, du fait de l'exigence du réalisateur et de la mécanique tragique de l'argent, respectivement, scindés des autres : « Chaque modèle est intrinsèquement enfermé en lui-même, inexorablement égocentré. Les relations inter-humaines ne participent pas à sa complétude atypique car les personnages se croisent mais ne se rencontrent pas, se parlent mais ne communiquent pas » (Saule, 2005 : s. p.). Isolement et scission promeuvent le passage de la recherche du contact frustré à la manifestation du malaise par la polyphonie schizophrénique sarrautienne, mouvement vers le dehors, et le mutisme bressonien, mouvement vers le dedans.

Dans son passage à travers l'histoire du corps et la cénésthésie, définie comme « perception interne du propre corps » (Starobinski, 1981 : 261), Jean Starobinski rappelle la thèse de Blondel à propos de la conscience morbide, qui, « incapable d'utiliser le langage comme le commande l'instance collective, est une conscience engluée dans l'individuel cénesthésique – dans le non-verbal ou le préverbal » (267). De la même manière, la sous-conversation, envahie par les clichés, est le dernier essai de rapprochement linguistique vers l'autre. Bien qu'il ne s'agisse que « [d']un langage de masques. Ils donnent l'illusion d'une communication entre les personnages » (Calin, 1976 : 49).

Le corps démembré et exposé par le détail constitue donc le lieu du malaise dont le seul possible soulagement est la violence qui s'échappe de l'éclatement physique et discursif. Par le fragment, Sarraute et Bresson achèvent le saisissement du réel brut, de la matière première du monde, perceptible par le rapprochement et par l'écoute de ce qui jaillit du discours éclaté. Mais c'est surtout par les éclats des corps, réceptacles et émetteurs de la violence, opposés et imposés à l'autre, qu'il est possible de s'approcher du réel, même s'il ne s'agit que de la partie expulsée, lapsus symptomatique qui ressort des fragments que l'on aperçoit. Là où l'évocation prévaut sur la narration, où le détail prime sur la vision d'ensemble, le réel brut n'est que la pointe perceptible de ce qui reste à l'extérieur, dans le hors-champ, l'événement qui ne se concrétise pas, ce qui ne nous est pas montré, qui nous échappe.

III. Figures du Réel

Empruntant le terme de Pascal Augé, Deleuze définit l'*espace quelconque* comme « un espace parfaitement singulier, qui a seulement perdu son homogénéité, c'est-à-dire le principe de ses rapports métriques ou la connexion de ses propres parties […]. C'est un espace de conjonction

virtuelle, saisi comme pur lieu du possible » (Deleuze, 1983 : 155). Pour le philosophe, l'espace quelconque est la manière la plus fine dans l'image-affection de « dégager la naissance, le cheminement et la propagation de l'affect » (155) – de la qualité-puissance –, en tant que priméité, c'est-à-dire, « des qualités ou des puissances considérées pour elles-mêmes, sans référence à quoi que ce soit d'autre, indépendamment de toute question sur leur actualisation » (139).

Les escaliers, les couloirs, l'espace entraperçu lorsque l'on ouvre et ferme des portes… Dissociés d'un tout de plus en plus renfermé sur lui-même, ces espaces se construisent dans *L'Argent* de Bresson par le rythme des allers-retours, montées-descentes. L'espace se replie sur lui-même faisant émerger l'expression la plus pure. La porte d'entrée de la maison d'Yvon, le protagoniste, s'ouvre, mais ne permet pas d'apercevoir l'intérieur de la maison, seulement une autre porte qui montre légèrement un espace diaphane avec une table. Au lieu de permettre au spectateur d'entrer avec Yvon, c'est une coupure qui conduit à l'intérieur, tout en dotant la scène[2] d'une force propre, indépendante de la suite. La porte apparaît dénuée de tout autre référent spatial, ce qui nous empêche de l'identifier comme telle d'un premier regard, de la même manière que le mur décrit par Prévoyeur comme un « Rothko triste » (Prévoyeur, 2003 : 120), de par l'abstraction anti-narrative de l'image. La porte est donc contenue dans un plan rapproché qui ne couvre que l'espace entre le cou et les genoux du personnage qui essaie de l'ouvrir lorsque sa petite fille apparaît sur le seuil pour le recevoir. La coupure du corps du père permet une plus grande focalisation sur l'affection qui affleure de l'enfant, seul visage expressif parmi les modèles et peut-être le seul instant du film qui concentre du bonheur, bien qu'issu de la naïveté.

La question des lieux impersonnels, des lieux de passage, est centrale dans la cartographie du tropisme iii. Le tableau, peut-être inspiré des « contacts de Nathalie Sarraute avec les exilés russes, ainsi qu'avec les juifs qui dans les années 30 fuyaient le nazisme » (Minogue, 1996 : 1727), dépeint un univers fade, dépourvu de vie, dont la gamme de couleurs, s'il y en a une, se limite au gris et à la tonalité sombre : « des cours sombres » (Sarraute, 1996 : 6), « le fond sombre du couloir » (7). Des non-personnages comme des non-lieux, des existences anonymes identifiées à des espaces anonymes : « une salle d'attente dans une gare de banlieue déserte » (6). Comme l'espace, la personne est démunie des traits qui l'identifient, qui la rendent unique ou qui la relient à quelqu'un, à quelque chose, ou à un souvenir :

> Ils ne cherchaient jamais à se souvenir de la campagne où ils avaient joué autrefois, ils ne cherchaient jamais à retrouver la couleur et l'odeur de la petite ville où ils avaient grandi, il ne voyaient jamais surgir en eux, quand ils marchaient dans les rues de leur quartier, quand ils regardaient les devantures des magasins, quand ils passaient devant la loge de la concierge et la saluaient très poliment, ils ne voyaient jamais se lever dans leur souvenir un pan de mur inondé de vie, ou les pavés d'une cour, intenses et caressants, ou les marches douces d'un perron sur lequel ils s'étaient assis dans leur enfance. (6)

Le refoulement mémoriel des espaces qui incarnent les bonheurs du passé, des images d'affection – des lieux ouverts (la *campagne* et la *ville*), ou des fragments de lieux fixés dans le souvenir (*un pan de mur*, *les pavés d'une cour* et *les marches d'un perron*), avec des attributs qui les

[2] Voir Robert Bresson, *L'Argent*, 00:11:06-00:11:30.

personnifient, dénotant le plaisir d'être là (*inondé de vie*, *intenses et caressants* et *douces*) – constitue le déni du sentiment, de la sensation même ou tout simplement de la capacité de ressentir. Pourtant, le déni se trouve lui-même nié dans l'acte d'énonciation qui réhabilite, par contraste, le pouvoir de ces images dans un espace entièrement différent du précédent. Il s'agit des *rues de leur quartier*, où l'existence est sèche, vidée de vie.

Le seul rapprochement, la seule occasion de réconciliation avec l'humanité apparaît lorsque, « [d]ans l'escalier de leur maison, ils rencontraient parfois 'le locataire du dessous' » (6). Mais cette possibilité disparaît dès que, par le discours direct, il est désigné en fonction de l'adverbe spatial qui, loin d'être indépendant et de l'individualiser, est soumis à un système de référence variable selon l'énonciateur. Dans l'expression « le locataire du dessous », l'individu s'efface devant l'espace qui empêche tout rapport personnel et intersubjectif, lui-même effacé en tant que lien entre les individus. Ainsi disparaissent-ils, père et enfants, comme absorbés par un lieu faute de lumière, sans que l'on puisse les suivre : « La porte de leur appartement s'entrouvrait un instant pour les laisser passer. On les voyait […] s'éloigner silencieusement, glissant vers le fond sombre du couloir » (7) et s'évanouit avec eux toute possibilité d'atteindre la chaleur humaine. L'affection devient donc la douleur, la perte, le besoin d'oubli et la non-rencontre sur le seuil de la possibilité. C'est l'attente de la rencontre qui semble pouvoir se concrétiser, mais qui finit dissoute par la force de l'espace qui sort du cadre, le hors-champ par lequel disparaissent « le locataire du dessous » et ses enfants dans le blanc de la fin du tropisme.

Le traitement de la porte chez Bresson et Sarraute constitue la matérialisation de toutes les possibilités de l'image-affection. Si, chez le premier, la porte est le cadre qui fait apparaître le visage expressif de l'enfant, tout en abolissant la sensation d'espace (Deleuze, 1983 : 136) et en nous cachant ce qu'il y a derrière, chez Sarraute c'est le dos du « locataire du dessous » qui nous montre la porte, de sorte que l'espace devient le centre de l'expression. Le contraste des portes chez les deux créateurs fait ainsi varier les affects du désir à l'inquiétude.

La place du récit bressonnien et sarrautien est, en définitive, dans le hors-champ, en dehors du présent de l'action. Dans *L'Image-mouvement*, Deleuze attribue deux aspects au hors-champ :

> [U]n aspect relatif par lequel un système clos renvoie dans l'espace à un ensemble qu'on ne voit pas, et qui peut à son tour être vu, quitte à susciter un nouvel ensemble non-vu, à l'infini ; un aspect absolu par lequel le système clos s'ouvre à une durée immanente au tout de l'univers, qui n'est plus un ensemble et n'est pas de l'ordre du visible. (Deleuze, 1983 : 30)

Chez Sarraute, le hors-champ se manifeste comme la suspension provoquée par l'attente et la peur ressenties dans les tropismes v, vii, ix, xx. Ces quatre scènes se concentrent sur l'effet et la sensation, sans jamais manifester la cause logique, réfléchie, exposant des tableaux où l'expression passe au détriment de l'action et dans lesquels le réel brut montré cache le Réel défini comme « […] ce qui revient toujours à la même place – à cette place où le sujet en tant qu'il cogite, où la *res cogitans*, ne le rencontre pas » (Lacan, 1973 : 49).

Comme les yeux du lecteur de journaux concentré sur la rubrique « Actualité », dans la scène de la fusillade dans *L'Argent*, le spectateur bressonnien traverse l'événement sans s'apercevoir de ce qui est en train de se passer. Comme le journal au lecteur, le film cache l'action à son spectateur, le premier concentré sur les actualités, le second sur ce qui apparaît dans le cadre. Tous deux ratent ce qui reste dans le hors-champ.

La fin de *L'Argent*[3] constitue dans ce sens le paroxysme de l'action en hors-champ. Si, d'un côté, il s'agit de l'instant le plus intense – la véritable consécration d'Yvon en tant que meurtrier de toute une famille –, de l'autre côté, le crime du protagoniste reste relégué à l'*après-coup* : ce n'est que grâce au parcours du chien de la maison que le spectateur découvre les corps assassinés. Les images se succèdent à la vitesse du pas du chien, comme des échantillons d'un cauchemar, construites à la manière d'un rêve – par des fragments déplacés qui seront condensés par le montage. Finalement, dans la dernière chambre, la dernière personne vivante, la femme aux cheveux blancs qui « n'attend rien[4] », attend patiemment son heure. De sa mort, seul le geste d'Yvon saisissant la hache nous est montré. Le hors-champ garde le mystère, le secret d'une mort qui, comme celle de la *Jeanne d'Arc* de Bresson, devient sacrée. Du fait d'être sacrée, elle ne peut pas être dite, et relève dès lors du régime de l'euphémisme :

> Le verbe que nous avons rendu par « adorer en silence », c'est *euphēmein*. De ce mot, qui signifie à l'origine « observer un silence religieux », provient le terme d'« euphémisme », lequel désigne les mots tenant lieu d'autres que la pudeur ou la politesse interdisent de prononcer. (Agamben, 2003 : 34-35)

Le hors-champ constitue donc l'expression euphémique, aussi bien chez Bresson que chez Sarraute, qui rejette le face-à-face avec le récit. En revanche, il « témoigne d'une présence plus inquiétante, dont on ne peut même plus dire qu'elle existe, mais plutôt qu'elle 'insiste' ou 'subsiste', un Ailleurs plus radical, hors de l'espace et du temps homogènes » (Deleuze, 1983 : 30).

Faute de représentation, le Réel est ce *quelque chose*, ce *cela* d'inquiétant qui, comme dans le tropisme xx, ne nous laisse pas dormir, nous réveille. Caché dans la profondeur la plus sombre des tiroirs, derrière une porte, dans un regard, dans la coupure d'un plan, dans le fragment du corps, dans l'effet que produit la mécanique du mouvement qui n'est plus pensé par le corps agissant automatiquement. Caché, il attend. « Le [R]éel, dit Lacan, c'est au-delà du rêve que nous avons à le chercher – dans ce que le rêve a enrobé, a enveloppé, nous a caché, derrière le manque de la représentation dont il n'y a là qu'un tenant-lieu » (Lacan, 1973 : 59). En lien avec la définition de Lacan, Philippe Arnaud résume ainsi la place du réel dans l'œuvre de Bresson :

> Le réel, dans la réalité, c'est ce qui n'est pas encore assimilé, et à l'écran, le réel, c'est ce qui n'est pas immédiatement ou directement figurable. C'est ce qui se passe entre les choses. […] Le réel ne se confond pas avec la réalité, il en est la part excédentaire, dont la réalité, ce réel connu, pacifié, égal à son attente, porte le chiffre ou l'empreinte. […] Le réel relève d'un rapport entre indices qui désignent son apparition, le défaut dont s'accompagne son étrangeté. […] Le réel travaille dans une déhiscence de la réalité perceptible. Il désigne un lieu vide, c'est celui qui résulte d'un croisement, et produit une énigme qui s'élève au-dessus des interprétations avec la force irréductible d'un statut que n'épuise aucune des versions qui tentent de le nommer. (Arnaud, 2003 : 17-18)

[3] Voir Robert Bresson, *L'Argent*, 01:16:28-01:18:41.

[4] Voir Robert Bresson, *L'Argent*, 01:15:07.

Le Réel, c'est l'impossible avec le vide pour seule géographie, gisant dans l'abîme, aucune lumière ne peut l'atteindre, sauf peut-être celle de l'image-affection. Le hors-champ où le récit réside est, en définitive, le lieu commun aux deux créateurs, par lequel les frontières de l'invisible éclatent comme le réel immédiat, tout en faisant émerger la possibilité. Et c'est précisément dans le non-espace, dans le hors-champ, qu'existe le Réel. Il s'agit de l'espace (le non-espace) qui dessine la topographie de l'invisible, dont il est impossible de se rapprocher autrement que par le ressenti, l'infra-sensible. Un espace, en définitive, perçu par son négatif, au sens filmique, que l'on peut définir seulement par ses extrêmes – l'immédiateté sensible du réel brut. C'est là-bas où demeure ce *quelque chose* qui hante le devenir-action jamais matérialisé.

Derrière les portes, au fond du couloir, dans les tiroirs… c'est là où se cache l'irreprésentable, mais aussi dans les gares, dans les stations, des lieux communs, de passage quotidien où rien ni personne ne reste, des lieux qui invitent à l'oubli des mille visages, des mille gestes automatiques qui se répètent chaque jour et qui disparaissent… éphémères.

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Simone Weil's Practice of Attention as a Ritual of Prayer: Robert Bresson and Georges Bernanos

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In Simone Weil's religious and metaphysical philosophy, the concept of attention is a human practice of concentrated awareness that can be directed toward a single thought, an object, another being, the self, or one's soul. Attention is a learned practice, not an innate human characteristic. The practice of attention is integral to Weil's philosophy because it assists one to identify attachment and through introspection, transcend affliction. The curé in Robert Bresson's *Le Journal d'un curé de campagne* (*The Diary of a Country Priest*, 1951) loses his capacity for prayer when his faith becomes an attachment, and yet, his soul desires union with God, and thus grace. Grace, from the perspective of the curé, will provide reparation for his affliction: the acceptance of himself and the burden of his faith, the circumstances of his childhood, terminal illness, and the anticipation of death. This article engages in analysis of *Journal*, through the lens of Weil's philosophical concept, attention, while it also examines the parallel between Weil and the curé in their demeanor, compromised health, and emphasis toward the ritual (or habit) of prayer. Georges Bernanos, author of the novel that Bresson adapted, shares a similar view of grace, which supports the comparison of Weil's and Bresson's attention toward the soul.

Simone Weil's Concept of Attention as a Means for Encountering God and Divine Grace

When attention and prayer are aligned the soul is directed exclusively toward God. Weil believed that the greater the quality of attention the higher the attainment of truth: "Christ likes us to prefer truth to him because, before being Christ, he is truth. If one turns aside from him to go towards the truth, one will not go far before falling into his arms" (Weil, 1950: 36). Truth leads to illumination: our efforts of attention are rewarded when a light which is in exact proportion to them will flood the soul. The light I refer to is that which exists beyond Plato's cave. Illumination, that is the light, is accessible only to those who detach from unnecessary attachment. Weil writes: "Everything that is worthless shuns the light" (1952: 51). This is in part true, but not in a literal sense. Those of us who shun the light remain within the darkness of the cave, bound by attachment, while others who detach receive illumination. Attention that is self-focused and introspective enables awareness to be perceived that first acknowledges the attachment, then initiates the process of detachment. The attention in question should be of a considered form. Weil discerned that one should focus attention as one would during the ritual of prayer.

Weil regards the attention that is associated with education as instrumental in learning its potential. She uses the example of school exercises that enable the formation of attention to be attained by the students. This will in time cultivate an aptitude for a higher level of attention, an

intuitive attention, which Weil compares with the ritual of prayer: "school exercises use an inferior, discursive form of attention, the one that reasons; but, drawn on by a suitable method, it can prepare for the appearance in the soul of another type of attention, that which is the highest, intuitive attention" (2015: 140). Attention of an intuitive nature is attention that is uninhibited. It remains pure in intention however, it is expansive and exhibits a level of intensity and purpose, while still being considered in approach. Intuitive attention leads to creation, invention, discovery; it pertains to relations with others and with the self. It was Weil's conviction that when intuitive attention is turned directly toward God, it constitutes true prayer (140). In order to gain the aptitude for true prayer, one must first develop the capacity for a higher level of attention, an attention that is concentrated and pure. Only this level of attention can bring forth illumination.

The discipline that school exercises provide, however mundane they may appear, in time will garner the capacity to receive illumination through the application of attention that is of a higher quality. The process of learning cultivates an awareness that is otherwise not attained:

> If we concentrate our attention on trying to solve a problem of geometry, and if at the end of an hour we are no nearer to doing so than at the beginning, we have nevertheless been making progress each minute of that hour in another more mysterious dimension. Without our knowing or feeling it, this apparently barren effort has brought more light into the soul. The result will one day be discovered in prayer. (1950: 67)

When more light is brought into the soul, one becomes closer to truth. Truth is illuminated by the light, which is God. Truth represents all that is good and pertains to good (Hand, 1986: 63-4). For this to be achieved one must first establish desire as it relates to attention. Weil writes: "If there is a real desire, if the thing desired is light, the desire for light produces it. There is a real desire when there is an effort of attention. It is really light that is desired if all other incentives are absent" (1950: 68). The concentration involved in attention should not, according to Weil, become "confused with a kind of muscular effort" (70). The desire for light and one's aptitude for prayer should refrain from exertion that equates to force: "Saint Augustine remarks that attention should never be forced. He maintains that prayer should be shortened to suit the capacity of the soul" (Hand, 1986: 92). And he believed that "to prolong prayer is to have the soul throbbing with continued pious emotion toward him to whom we pray" (20). Rather than forcing oneself to initiate attention or, being forceful during the practice of attention, in this context education, it would benefit oneself to recognize what provides fulfilment and thus pleasure and joy. Desire will then be led by such fulfilment (Weil, 1950: 71). The desire that draws God down to enter the void is the same desire whose incentive is really the light. To reiterate: one's desire for light produces illumination (71).

It is established by Weil that one must achieve total detachment from all imposed or self-imposed attachment for a higher level of attention to be attained. The presence of evil and thus any residual attachment will only weaken one's ability to practice higher (intuitive) attention. Conversely, if resistance is apparent where attention is concerned, Weil is reassuring in her assertion that "every time we really concentrate our attention, we destroy the evil in ourselves" (72). Therefore, when one participates in a higher quality of attention, the residual attachments will improve by way of increased awareness and patience. Patience is essential to reach fullness of attention. To wait in patience by not seeking truth, is to one's advantage. It is more advantageous to practice attention in preparation to receive, as opposed to seeking with

intention. This relates to the "muscular effort" referred to by Weil, which she considered detrimental. Weil writes: "above all our thought should be empty, waiting, not seeking anything, but ready to receive in its naked truth the object which is to penetrate it" (72). To empty one's thought and wait but not seek is to pay attention in emptiness. Attention in emptiness but with desire directed toward God will draw him down to us. The object Weil speaks of is God; it is God that penetrates our thought with truth. The diverse knowledge one shall acquire through attention and subsequently detachment will assist in the orientation of the soul toward grace, and thus, transformation.

According to Weil, it is rare that one has the capacity to direct attention toward another who experiences suffering or affliction. It is rarer still to show attention that is sincere, derived from the soul and with pure intention. In fact, Weil considers attention within this context to be a miracle: "it is almost a miracle; it *is* a miracle. Nearly all those who think they have this capacity do not possess it. Warmth of heart, impulsiveness, pity are not enough" (75). For one to attain the means to direct attention toward those in need, one must first empty one's own soul "to receive into oneself the being it is looking at, just as he is, in all his truth" (75). For Weil, one's capacity for the love of God should be equal to that of one's neighbor, in other words, humanity at large. The recognition that the sufferer exists is imperative here, as immediately it confirms that one is initiating pure attention toward another in need; it is exhibiting awareness and acknowledgement that is external to oneself and one's own needs.

Affliction was the impetus for three separate and direct contacts with Catholicism that Weil experienced. These were significant and marked a distinct development in her philosophy as related to religion, spirituality, and mysticism. After an episode of voluntary factory work, during which Weil suffered physically at the hands of industrial machines and the relentless demands of the labor, she absorbed through her empathic and altruistic tendencies, the profound affliction of those she worked alongside. At the conclusion of this period, in 1936, when Weil's health was once again compromised, she was taken by her parents to Portugal to convalesce, where in a Portuguese village during a patronal festival she engaged in the first of three contacts with the divine. The second contact was in 1937 at Assisi, in a twelfth-century Romanesque chapel of Santa Maria degli Angeli. A resonance remained of the purity in the place where Saint Francis used to pray. In this moment, Weil was overwhelmed and compelled "for the first time in my life to go down on my knees" (34). In 1938, the third contact occurred at Solesmes, when Weil, by way of concentrated attention, was able to transcend the suffering she incurred from a severe headache to have direct contact with the divine.[1]

In Solesmes, during Holy Week, Weil met a young English Catholic who imparted his wisdom regarding the metaphysical English poets of the seventeenth century; of those poets, it was George Herbert, and in particular, his poem "Love", that had an enduring impact on Weil.[2] Weil learned Herbert's poem by heart and when she suffered from a headache, she

[1] Further to Weil's direct experience of God, the divine: "Letters of Farewell," Letter IV: Spiritual Autobiography in Simone Weil, *Waiting for God* (*Attente de Dieu*, 1950), translation by Emma Craufurd (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951), pp. 28-49.

[2] George Herbert (1593-1633), "Love," is the third of three poems published in *The Temple: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations* (Cambridge: Printed by Thomas Buck and Roger Daniel, 1633). In the audio commentary for *Journal*, Peter Cowie references Herbert when he observes that Bresson accentuates glass and often the character is waiting at glass doors creating the appearance of being visible and yet closed off. He is referring in this instance to the curé arriving at the manor: "George

would recite the words with concentration that was reminiscent of prayer, the higher level of attention she suggests one practice:

> Often, at the culminating point of a violent headache, I make myself say it [Herbert's poem, "Love"] over, concentrating all my attention upon it and clinging with all my soul to the tenderness it enshrines. I used to think I was merely reciting it as a beautiful poem, but without my knowing it the recitation had the virtue of a prayer. It was during one of these recitations that, as I told you, Christ himself came down and took possession of me. (35)

The recitation of Herbert's poem "Love" had the virtue of a prayer because, when Weil concentrated her attention on the words, it released the need for her to reside in her affliction. The poem redirected her attention from focusing solely on the attachment, which was the headache she suffered. Thus, Weil was able to temporarily detach from affliction. She shifted her consciousness beyond the self and her own needs. When Weil emptied her thoughts of affliction, she gained the capacity to focus on the poem, which in this instance represents the divine. Reciting Herbert's poem initiates Weil's desire as movement toward God. It is her desire that draws God down: "He only comes to those who ask him to come; and he cannot refuse to come to those who implore him long, often and ardently" (71). Weil implored God through the concentration of her attention that was derived from her soul, a soul that contained the void caused by attachment. When desire is directed toward God it engages the soul. By engaging one's soul with God, one shall experience the presence of grace.

Attention as it was Conceived by Robert Bresson in his Approach to the Cinematograph

Through the attention Bresson imposed on the cinematograph he conveyed a realism that required participation from the audience: "what I attempt with my films is to touch what's real. Perhaps I'm obsessed with reality" (Bresson, 1966). Bresson considered what is real to be beneath the surface, a subliminal reality. It was Bresson's preference to reveal as opposed to show his intentions to the audience. Bresson in 1966: "Someone once said I'm one 'who imposes order.' I prefer that to 'director' like on a stage because I don't see a stage anywhere". When Bresson imposes order he focuses concentrated attention toward the process of the cinematograph (During, 2012: 171). His attention, I believe, was drawn toward the reciprocal exchange that occurs within this process. The reciprocity I refer to is the relationship between what Bresson himself can see and what is seen by the participants involved: "See at once, in what you are seeing, what will be seen" (Bresson, 1975: 69). Divination is critical to this exchange.

Bresson encouraged a reciprocity that was based on divination. Divination transpired as a mutual interchange between realism and the supernatural during his process of filmmaking. Bresson's cinema involves a dialogue between the temporal-material realm and supernatural reality. The dialogue consists of an unspoken but significant presence which is cultivated by Bresson, both in his creative process, and for those viewers who have the potential to divine

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Herbert, the religious poet of the seventeenth century, wrote those famous lines 'a man may look on glass, on it may stay his eye'". Peter Cowie, audio commentary for Robert Bresson *Journal d'un curé de campagne* (*The Diary of a Country Priest*, 1951), (Criterion Collection, DVD, 2003), (00:17:32).

what he only partially reveals. This ability of Bresson's to create while still retaining an element of restraint demonstrates the filmmaker's sophistication. Divination is present in the collaboration between Bresson and his models (or protagonists), and crucially, in the perception and participation of the audience and their experience of his cinema. If one is to participate as Bresson encourages, it requires a higher level of attention that is intuitive, as Weil has suggested.

Divination relies on one's intuition, where one intuits what is perhaps initially unseen. Intuition derives from what is instinctively felt as opposed to a more rational approach. For Bresson, the camera represents a neutral component in the transition from conception to the recording of the film. It is neutral in that it records what is being played out in front of the lens without the complication of intelligence: "Divination – how can one not associate that name with the two sublime machines I use for my work? Camera and tape recorder carry me far away from the intelligence which complicates everything" (1975: 88). What remained of enduring interest to Bresson is not what is shown by his models in character, but what they conceal: "Cinematographic films made of inner movements *which are seen*" (50). Bresson believes that by capturing what is concealed, he reveals "inner movements," which are by normal standards indiscernible to most. The interiority Bresson discloses relates to the soul, whether of his models, or regarding the viewer's perception: "Your camera catches not only physical movements that are inapprehensible by pencil, brush or pen, but also certain states of soul" (66).

The divination Bresson associates with the camera and what it records is the realism he intended to portray. When Bresson is asked: "To you, what is the supernatural?" He replies: "It's reality, a precise reality, that we get as close to as possible, almost penetrating things. That's the supernatural" (Bresson, 1965). Realism, then, for Bresson, is to penetrate through the exterior façade to reveal interior movement; that is, the supernatural. In Bresson's cinema, realism and the supernatural remain harmonious and exist simultaneously. Intuitive attention and divination refrain from the over complication suggested by Bresson, a complication which occurs in the mind (1975: 48). Bresson considers the crude real that is recorded by the camera to capture what was intended in its conception, without external interference that would impede divination. Divination draws the viewer toward a subliminal reality to reveal the interiority of the character. Reciprocity is apparent between what is composed by Bresson, recorded by the camera, and translated by the audience. It is a mutual exchange that if participated as Bresson intended, the attention of the audience will intuit as opposed to intellectualize the experience of the film.

Bresson extends intuitive attention toward the models that he casts in his cinema. Often there is an unspoken exchange where divination contributes to achieve an unveiling of movement, a movement that is internal:

> Human Models: Movement from the exterior to the interior. (Actors: movement from the interior to the exterior.) The thing that matters is not what they show me but what they hide from me and, above all, *what they do not suspect is in them*. Between them and me: telepathic exchanges, divination. (6)

The telepathic exchange Bresson refers to is based on his ability to see into the models he engages; to divine himself what already exists and provide an environment conducive for the models to reveal themselves: "Model. You illumine him and he illumines you. The light you

receive from him is added to the light he receives from you" (52). Donald Richie relays a conversation with Anne Wiazemsky, who played Marie in *Au hasard Balthazar*: "Anne said, of course she didn't create her performance, she just stood there. What Bresson wanted already existed in her which he was unveiling by taking her picture. The wonderful x-ray eye that he had, where he can look at you and know who you are" (2004).

Bresson's attention required from his models a certain restraint of emotion and mechanical delivery of lines until "something 'clicks' in the character, and they give me what I'm after, but they give it without realizing it" (1965). The model unveils to Bresson a latent existence which is considered divine, that is, the soul: "On the screen, I'd like to have something more than bodies in motion. I'd like to be able to make perceptible the soul and the superior presence, which is omnipresent, this entity which is God."[3] It is a priority for Bresson to make visible what is not seen, at least at a superficial level. He manages to capture the soul and presence of God by utilizing his own ability to divine and thus see what others cannot.

For the attention of the audience to be drawn toward what is latent as opposed to external and expressive, Bresson prefers the actions of his models to recover, in a sense, the automatism of real life. He believes that our gestures and words are essentially automatic: "Our hands are autonomous. Our gestures, our limbs, are practically autonomous. They're not under our command. That's cinema. What cinema is not is thinking out a gesture, thinking out words" (1966). This is reaffirmed by Michel de Montaigne: "'*Tout mouvement nous descouvre*' ('*Every movement reveals us*'). But it only reveals us if it is automatic (not commanded, not willed)" (*apud* Bresson, 1975: 83). Movement that is automatic and not premeditated reveals one's authentic self. One could say that one's authentic self is derived from the soul. This pertains to the realism (the supernatural) that Bresson aspired to achieve in his cinema.

Divination describes the way in which Bresson not only sees when he creates, but it also identifies the mutual exchange that is reciprocal between each encounter he has during his creative process. I consider that through this attentive approach he implores this way of seeing from the audience by applying a strategic level of restraint. Thus, Bresson intentionally limits what is available to the viewer at a superficial level, and he requires one to look beyond surface reality to pursue a more resonant meaning that exceeds one's initial interpretation. When the viewer participates by way of divination, intuitively, they are using a higher level of attention, which in turn expands their perception. As we have learned from Weil: intuitive attention offers expansion and awakens the soul to spiritual awareness and the presence of God. An audience that utilizes intuitive attention to witness the state of the soul has achieved what Bresson intended, by simultaneously engaging their own soul with the supernatural. This practice is the orientation of the soul toward grace.

[3] François Weyergans in response to Bresson: "This presence you are very conscious of, do you try to translate it with a camera or is it something that appears in the camera by itself?" Bresson: "No, it's primordial. It was there from the start." Weyergans: "In you?" Bresson: "In me, of course." Robert Bresson, "Bresson: Without a Trace" (*Cinéastes de notre temps*, 1965), *Un condamné à mort s'est échappé, ou Le vent souffle où il vent* (*A Man Escaped or The Wind Bloweth Where it Listeth*, 1956), (Criterion Collection, DVD, 2013), (00:50:34).

A Higher Level of Attention as a Ritual of Prayer in *Le Journal d'un curé de campagne* (*The Diary of a Country Priest*, 1951)

There is a mutual concern associated with one's faith in God between the curé of Ambricourt (Claude Laydu) in *Le Journal d'un curé de campagne* and Weil in her own spiritual development. Both endeavor to question the devotion they have for God by gauging their capacity for prayer. One's capacity for prayer is dependent on one's aptitude for attention. The curé's and Weil's aptitude for attention is compromised in part because of their failing health. They both suffer from affliction that is inescapable: the curé's deterioration is depicted on screen until inevitably he is diagnosed with stomach cancer, and Weil exhibited physical weakness from infancy that in adulthood manifested in fatigue and recurring severe headaches.[4] The curé and Weil also share a somewhat deliberate tendency to remain ignorant of their physical decline, which contributes to their unavoidable fate of premature death.

The curé as the protagonist of *Journal* is internally conflicted by his health, but also by the burden of his devotion to God and his standing as priest in the rural village of Ambricourt, France. Bresson wrote the screenplay based on the novel written by Georges Bernanos of the same title, completed in 1936.[5] The story is set during the early 1930s when the curé, who is the newly appointed priest of the local church, navigates a less than encouraging reception from a community that is lacking in faith but not in contempt. The curé is treated with disdain and suspicion due to his fragile appearance and ingenuous demeanor. A parallel is drawn by Bernanos and reiterated by Bresson, through the analogy of Christ's passion in relation to the curé's affliction: "Whatever I were to do, were I to pour out my last drop of blood (and indeed sometimes I fancy the village has nailed me up here on a cross and is at least watching me die) I could never possess it" (Bernanos, 1936: 40). It is implied by Bernanos that both the curé's parents were alcoholics, which is reflected in his solitary diet consisting of wine and bread (96). Frequent diary entries that are written by the curé reveal to the audience his interior mind and the state of his soul.[6] Bresson uses pleonasm for emphasis, such as, an overlapping of the curé recording in his diary a scene he will then narrate, and following this, the viewer shall see the same scene projected on screen.

The curé of Torcy (André Guibert) is the young curé's superior and mentor who offers support and firm but wise guidance. In the manor reside the count (Jean Riveyre) and countess (Marie-Monique Arkell) and their daughter, Chantal (Nicole Ladmiral), who is the curé's antagonist. The curé's relationship with the countess, however, is reciprocal in nature. It is their

[4] Simone Pétrement considered Weil's compromised health at infancy to be related to her mother's (Madame Bernard Weil) attack of appendicitis, for which she had to undergo rigorous treatment while still nursing Weil as a newly born. Simone Pétrement, *Simone Weil: A Life*, translation by Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976), pp. 7-8.

[5] It is of interest to note that Weil corresponded with Georges Bernanos in 1938. Her letter expresses admiration for *Le Journal d'un curé de campagne* (*The Diary of a Country Priest*, 1936) and *Les Grands Cimetières sous la lune* (*The Great Cemeteries under the Moon,* 1938). Weil then continues at length concerning the Spanish Civil War and her intention to enlist. *Simone Weil: Seventy Letters, Personal and Intellectual Windows on a Thinker*, translation by Richard Rees (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2015), pp. 105-109. Also, regarding Weil and Bernanos: Pétrement, 277-278, 332-333.

[6] Peter Cowie explains suffering in the context of Bernanos; he notes that Bresson was drawn to Bernanos for the same reason he was drawn to Dostoevsky: "both writers Bresson has commented, are searching for the human soul" (2003: 00:19:55).

spiritual encounter that redeems the countess's soul from the loss of her child, while providing solace for the curé in the form of restoration of self. The curé leaves for Lille to be seen by a doctor, only to receive the diagnosis of stomach cancer. Though he passes away soon after, he will accept grace, the divine, when his soul is reunited with God.

The fullness of the curé's attention during the ritual of prayer is indicative of his desire that is directed toward God: "I never endeavored to pray so much. At first quietly, calmly, then with an almost desperate will that made my heart tremble" (Bresson, 1951: 00:25:44) (Fig.1).

Fig. 1. The curé of Ambricourt (Claude Laydu) in despair, as he doubts his capacity for prayer, yet he contains the desire to pray and contends that God could not ask for more (Bresson, 1951: 00:28:41).

The curé's desperate will represents the over-exertion of attention that Weil disparages; yet his need for atonement endures, which leaves him entirely depleted. This is evident when his ability to engage with God in prayer requires from him too much: "I know, of course, that the desire to pray is a prayer in itself, that God can ask no more than that of us. But this was no duty which I discharged. At that moment I needed prayer as much as I needed air to draw my breath or oxygen to fill my blood" (Bernanos, 1936: 103).[7] The curé's desire to pray remains despite his perpetual fear that his connection to the divine is an illusion and his sins will prevail. He relentlessly questions the attention he directs toward God in the form of prayer: "For weeks I had not prayed, had not been able to pray. Unable? Who knows? That supreme grace has got to be earned like any other, and I no doubt had ceased to merit it" (141).

[7] Desire that is directed toward God must derive from the heart in the form of love; desire is the voice of the heart, according to Augustine: "He who prays with desire sings in his heart, even though his tongue be silent. But if he prays without desire he is dumb before God, even though his voice sounds in the ears of men" (On Ps. 86, 1). Thomas A. Hand. O.S.A. *Augustine on Prayer* (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Corp., 1986), pp. 20-21.

The curé's spirit of prayer (or "habit" as described by Bernanos) (242) is marred by his self-doubt. This is reminiscent of Weil's view that she was unworthy of the sacraments. Both the curé and Weil carry with them an inhibition that stemmed from their sense of inadequacy, which imposed itself on their residing faith.[8] Weil writes to Reverend Father Perrin in 1942: "During this time of spiritual progress I had never prayed. I was afraid of the power of suggestion that is in prayer" (1950: 37). Weil continues regarding her absence of prayer: "Until last September I had never once prayed in all my life, at least not in the literal sense of the word. I had never said any words to God, either out loud or mentally. I had never pronounced a liturgical prayer" (37). When an opportunity came for Weil to learn the "Our Father" (or Lord's Prayer) in Greek and recite it by heart, she did so incessantly and with pure attention.[9] The effect of this practice on Weil is described as follows:

> At times the very first words tear my thoughts from my body and transport it to a place outside space where there is neither perspective nor point of view [...] there is silence, a silence which is not an absence of sound, but which is the object of a positive sensation, more positive than that of sound. Noises, if there are any, only reach me after crossing this silence. Sometimes, also, during this recitation or at other moments, Christ is present with me in person, but his presence is infinitely more real, more moving, more clear than on that first occasion when he took possession of me. (37-39)

Christ's possession of Weil and of the curé is apparent in the purity of attention they direct toward God. It is clear by Weil's description that, as in her first visitation from Christ, transcendence occurs from the temporal plane to the supernatural, where Christ is there to greet her. The encounter between Weil and Christ has intensified, which I believe is due to Weil's refinement in her ability to practice attention that is aligned with her intuition. This is evident in her discernment of when not to pray: "I say it [the "Our Father"] again out of sheer pleasure, but I only do it if I really feel the impulse" (38).

Though the curé's soul is oriented toward God as Weil's is, his internal struggle appears greater, and his doubts persist as he writes in his diary: "I only wanted to show complete acceptance and surrender. The same solitude, the same silence, but this time, no hope in breaking through the obstacle. There's no obstacle. Nothing. God has left me. Of this, I am sure" (Bresson, 1951: 00:29:11). The silence Weil suggests as "the object of a positive sensation" is the presence of Christ, as opposed to that of the curé for whom solitude and silence become the obstacle he is unable to break through: "Behind me there was nothing, and before me was a wall. A black wall" (00:29:03). It is as if the capacity of the curé's soul for prayer has been exhausted and his faith in God has grown to become an attachment. Force that is associated with attention in the ritual of prayer is detrimental to the soul, as both Weil and Augustine have stated.

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[8] Further to the curé's lack of self-worth concerning his childhood: Georges Bernanos, *Le Journal d'un curé de campagne* (*The Diary of a Country Priest*, 1936), translation by Pamela Morris (Massachusetts, Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2002), 70, 142, 235, 275-276, 280.

[9] This occurred in Le Poët, France, after Weil had been teaching Greek to Gustave Thibon. Weil soon began working in the grape harvest, where she would continue to frequently recite the prayer: "If during the recitation my attention wanders or goes to sleep, in the minutest degree, I begin again until I have once succeeded in going through it with absolute attention" (1950: 38).

The curé enters a significant spiritual exchange with the soul of the bereft countess at the manor (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2. The curé, left, and the countess (Marie-Monique Arkell) during their exchange at the manor, which is reciprocal, in part, because of attachment, thus, they each contain a soul that suffers in affliction (Bresson, 1951: 00:52:16).

The countess is bereft because she is grieving the loss of her son and thus her faith in God has been reduced to suspicion and accusation. The curé speaks to the countess: "God will break you" (00:44:45). The countess: "Break me? (The countess turns to look at a photo of her deceased son) God took my son from me. What more can he do to me? I no longer fear him". The curé: "God took him away for a time, but your hardness?" The countess interrupts: "Silence". The curé: "No, I will not be silent. The coldness of your heart may keep you from him forever". The countess: "That's blasphemy! God doesn't take revenge!"

The conversation evolves and with perseverance the curé persuades the countess to detach from her grief, detach from the blame and resentment that has accumulated and consumed her. Affliction has isolated the countess, and her heart no longer desires to communicate with God. The loss of her son has established a void in her soul, which she in turn fills with pain: the countess's bereavement is an attachment which caused her to lose faith in the divine. The curé, in his attention (as compassion) toward the countess, observes her indifference to God as she struggles to justify, as Weil has done, the necessary existence of good and evil; he recognizes this because he shares the same residual doubt, the same question of God. Thus, the curé is bound to his own attachment: an attachment of faith and an overpowering need for grace and God's acceptance. The soul of the curé and that of the countess acquire during their encounter reprieve from the desperate plight to be released from internal affliction.

In this devastating scene with the countess, the curé draws her in with supplication to release her soul from affliction. When the countess's soul is oriented toward God, her son will be returned to her by order of the divine. He will be returned to her, but only when she yields

to God, unconditionally. However, her affliction extends beyond that of her son to the relationship with her husband and daughter, the count and Louise, respectively. The blatant infidelities of the count and contentious attitude shown by Chantal only reaffirm the isolation experienced by the countess. The curé can relate to being felt cast aside and solitary, when even attention to God in the form of prayer appears too difficult. At the height of their exchange the countess tears the medallion (or locket) from round her neck containing a photograph of her infant son and throws it into the fire. In haste, the curé retrieves it as the countess drops to her knees in submission: "forgive me," she says (00:51:56). "God is no torturer. He wants us to be merciful with ourselves", replies the curé.

The curé then blesses the countess and leaves the manor for Dombasle. Upon his arrival home he receives a small package and letter from the countess. She has sent to him the now empty medallion, still fastened to the broken chain. The curé narrates the letter which expresses gratitude for the peace he has given her soul (Bernanos, 1936: 173). The following morning, however, he learns that the countess has since passed. It was the curé's intuitive attention that allowed the countess to receive the presence of grace. Grace will not be permitted to enter the curé's soul until he learns to accept his own fate. The curé's fate is his passing on to the realm of the divine, where he will no longer suffer affliction. Absolution will be granted to him when he has reconciled with himself[10] (296), as his final words reveal: "Does it matter? Grace is everywhere" (298).

In conclusion, for one to cultivate an aptitude for attention of the highest degree, attention that is intuitive, a pure attention, it is necessary to acquire an awareness of the soul. When the state of the soul is in equilibrium one's capacity for attention is increased. Thus, attention must first be directed toward the soul because the soul is the source from which attention will emanate. It has been established that a higher level of attention is not an inherent human quality, but a learned practice: learned either by forced circumstances, such as, affliction, or garnered over time through experience. This relates to attention in any context and in all areas of human life. To engage with attention as Weil suggests, will require patience. Attention that is practiced with concentrated awareness will cause one to become confronted with fate or drawn from the temporal to the supernatural, as Weil intended.

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[10]Further to the curé's self-acceptance, or grace: "The strange mistrust I had of myself, of my own being, has flown, I believe for ever. That conflict is done. I cannot understand it any more. I am reconciled with myself, to the poor, poor shell of me" (296). Also, see Michael R. Tobin, *Georges Bernanos: The Theological Source of His Art* (Montreal, Quebec: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), p. 105.

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Macbeth: distilări cinematografice

Macbeth: Cinematic Distillations

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Macbeth este fără îndoială una dintre cele mai populare piese shakespeariene în arealul adaptărilor şi aproprierilor, reuşind să exercite o influenţă impresionantă şi asupra regizorilor de film, care au ales de-a lungul timpului să facă din figura tiranului un personaj permeabil la multiple interpretări: suflet vândut diavolului, Faust *avant la lettre*, rege machiavelic, victimă a ambiţiilor propriei soţii sau simbol al luptei nu întotdeauna egale dintre Bine şi Rău. În articolul de faţă îmi propun să analizez şi să compar trei ecranizări ale piesei *Macbeth* (Orson Welles, 1948; Roman Polanski, 1971; respectiv, Joel Coen, 2021), identificând în ce măsură onorează acestea relaţia cu textul-sursă şi cât de adecvate sau inovatoare sunt noile soluţii estetice şi noile grile de lectură pe care le propun. Ce face diferenţa dintre o prelucrare artistică validă şi una implauzibilă? Cum reuşeşte mediul cinematografic să integreze un material destinat de altfel strict reprezentării pe scenă?

Cuvinte-cheie

***Macbeth*; William Shakespeare; apropriere; ecranizare; Orson Welles; Roman Polanski; Joel Coen.**

Macbeth is undoubtedly one of the most popular Shakespearean plays in the realm of adaptations and appropriations, immensely influential on film directors who have chosen over the decades to transform the tyrant figure into a versatile character, open to many interpretations and ways of reading: an unfortunate soul sold to the Devil, a Faust *avant la lettre*, a Machiavellian king, a sheer victim of his wife's ambitions, or a symbol of the not always fair fight between Good and Evil. In this article my main objective is analyzing and contrasting three film adaptations of *Macbeth* (Orson Welles, 1948; Roman Polanski, 1971 and Joel Coen, 2021), identifying to what degree do they honour the connection to the original text and how appropriate or innovative are the new aesthetic solutions and the new insights they come up with. What's the difference between a plausible and an implausible adaptation? How does the cinematic medium succeed in assimilating a material originally created for the specific purpose of being represented on stage?

Keywords

***Macbeth*; William Shakespeare; appropriation; movie adaptation; Orson Welles; Roman Polanski; Joel Coen.**

La atâtea secole distanţă, Shakespeare continuă să trăiască printre noi, căci în virtutea flexibilităţii semantice şi a modului particular în care poveştile sale relevă adevăruri fundamentale despre natura umană, el a câştigat un loc central în canonul literar, suscitând în egală măsură fascinaţie şi controversă. Longevitatea receptării sale, un proces de altfel inepuizabil, presupune însă expunerea la un public mereu în schimbare, în mijlocul unei lumi care nu încetează să evolueze în modurile şi mediile sale de reprezentare. Odată ce cinematografia

s-a impus ca spaţiu distinct de manifestare artistică, ecranizările pieselor lui Shakespeare au proliferat într-un ritm accelerat, devenind un gen per se. De la filmul mut *Regele Ioan* (o protoadaptare, un scurt-metraj de doar patru minute, lansat în 1899) până la flamboaiantele producţii hollywoodiene precum *Romeo+Juliet* (1996), regizorii şi l-au însuşit pe Shakespeare, găsind forme diferite de a-l transpune pe ecran, atât pentru a-şi demonstra propria virtuozitate şi pentru a testa limitele mediului pe care îl reprezintă, cât şi pentru a demonstra publicului că, deşi cinematografia e în principiu o formă de entertainment, ea nu e complet desprinsă de reperele culturii înalte. Astfel, dintre piesele cel mai des selectate de regizori se numără *Macbeth*, povestea despre ambiţie şi regalitate plasată în Scoţia medievală devenind în scurt timp o metaforă politică universală, uşor de asociat cu noile evenimente istorice, din realitatea imediată a publicului modern, un text ofertant prin însăşi ambiguitatea şi contrastele sale.

Cu toate acestea, fiecare text literar reprezentat pe marele ecran este inevitabil supus unui proces transformativ radical în ceea ce priveşte timpul de receptare (semnificativ mai mic pentru audienţa dintr-o sală de cinema), mijloacele expresive (din a doua jumătate a secolului al XX-lea, un mixaj de imagini, sunete şi cuvinte) şi convenţiile estetice (originalitatea discursului fiind înlocuită în schimb de o anume poetică a cadrelor filmice, aici *a privi* având prioritate în faţa oricărei codificări lingvistice a realităţii, oricât de izbutită). Filmul e o distilerie infernală a textului, manipulându-l, destructurându-l, reasamblându-l, oferindu-i o identitate vizuală fixă, esenţializându-l. Pe cale de consecinţă, *Macbeth*, în varianta lui cinematică, a cunoscut de-a lungul timpului o serie de revizuiri, mai mici sau mai mari în funcţie de concepţia regizorală, filmele, noile produse culturale derivative, fiind caracterizate de un grad mai mic sau mai mare de fidelitate faţă de textul original. În articolul de faţă, îmi propun să analizez trei astfel de aproprieri cinematografice: *Macbeth* (1948, Orson Welles), *Macbeth* (1971, Roman Polanski), respectiv *The Tragedy of Macbeth* (2021, Joel Coen). Acestea, aşa cum se observă, au fost lansate în perioade distincte (marcate de contexte socioculturale foarte diferite), aparţinând unor regizori cu motivaţii şi grile de lectură specifice. Analizez în această manieră permeabilitatea textului shakespearian, destinat de altfel reprezentării pe scenă, şi măsura în care poate fi el exploatat cu succes într-un mediu nefamiliar precum cinematografia, mediu în aparenţă rezistent la un produs cultural elisabetan, generat în cu totul alt spirit şi în alte condiţii tehnologice.

În afara provocării de a găsi o cale viabilă de a integra filmic un material prin excelenţă dramatic, distanţa temporală dintre noi şi Shakespeare nu este complet anulată de versatilitatea textelor sale.

> The twentieth century has witnessed a revolution in sentiment, and to an undetermined degree in private morality, so that an estrangement from Shakespeare exists in some areas not unlike that which existed among the literati of the Restoration. There is more than a little hostility in the air toward Shakespeare's moral and political assumptions on the one hand and to his generous view of human nature on the other—a reaction against both his kind of conservatism and his kind of liberalism.[1] (Harbage, 1967: 70)

[1] [Secolul XX (şi am putea include aici la fel de bine şi secolul XXI) a fost martor la o revoluție semnificativă în modul de a simți al oamenilor şi, într-un anume grad, greu de determinat, la schimbări majore în viața lor morală privată, aşa că e clar că în anumite privințe există o distanță între noi şi Shakespeare, nu cu mult deosebită de aceea care exista şi la erudiții din timpul Restaurației. În aer pluteşte ceva mai mult decât o ostilitate minoră în privința prezumțiilor morale şi politice ale lui Shakespeare pe de-o parte, şi a viziunii lui umaniste generoase, pe de altă parte – o reacție împotriva atât a conservatorismului său specific, cât şi a liberalismului său.] (traducere proprie)

Atât publicul, cât şi regizorul se pot confrunta şi, de altfel, se confruntă cu discrepanţe inevitabile între sensibilitatea contemporană şi etosul elisabetan, de aici conturându-se cu un oarecare sentiment al urgenţei nevoia de a găsi o cale de mijloc, un compromis plauzibil între original şi adaptare. Echilibrul pe care fiecare regizor încearcă să-l atingă prin mijloace proprii într-un astfel de proces alchimic este tocmai conservarea spiritului textului-sursă printr-un echivalent modern plauzibil, fie că acesta se traduce prin alterarea unui anumit personaj, introducerea unui element simbolic nou, redimensionarea spaţiului ficţional, intervenţii asupra *script*-ului, nuanţarea într-o direcţie profund subiectivă a tonului general al poveştii etc. Indiferent de maniera de intervenţie aleasă, această restructurare e absolut necesară pentru plauzibilitatea, succesul şi relevanţa oricărei adaptări.

Orson Welles: un *Macbeth* de inspiraţie voodoo

O ecranizare de referinţă a piesei *Macbeth* este filmul lui Orson Welles, lansat în 1948, care, urmând liniile stilistice ale expresionismului german şi exploatând artistic cultura Voodoo din Haiti, a prelucrat textul shakespearian în direcţia unei poveşti întunecate despre pulsiunile instinctive ale individului, care-l pot conduce pe acesta spre o capitulare absolută şi profund iraţională în faţa forţelor Răului. Această versiune a eroului tragic Macbeth (interpretat de Orson Welles însuşi) relevă în mod prioritar fascinaţia demonică a puterii politice şi procesul ireversibil de dezintegrare morală care-l izolează pe protagonist de propria lume. Acest Macbeth, trăind cu iluzia forţei sale interioare de a răsturna ordinea lucrurilor şi de a disloca Binele ca pe o superstiţie limitativă, devine de fapt o păpuşă maleabilă în mâna vrăjitoarelor, un Faust *avant la lettre*. În acest sens, Orson Welles asamblează elementele compoziţionale specifice adaptării sale astfel încât toate să conveargă în direcţia unei fatale deposedări identitare, prezentându-ne în consecinţă un Macbeth alienat, străin de sine, redus în cele din urmă la o maşină de ucis.

În spiritul accentuatei dihotomii Bine-Rău a textului-sursă, Welles face aceste contraste morale cu atât mai stridente cu cât suprapune peste figura personajului Ross, în original un nobil scoţian de rang secund de la curtea lui Macbeth, un preot, o instanţă a Binelui în contrapunct cu prezenţa demonică a celor trei vrăjitoare. Pe tot parcursul filmului, preotul va fi activ implicat în recuperarea integrităţii morale a regatului, eforturile lui susţinute dovedindu-se ineficiente şi chiar rizibile în faţa unui antierou profund viciat, deja dispus să cadă în păcat, în aşteptarea unei conjuncturi prielnice care să-i infirme fricile şi principiile etice, slabe automatisme sufleteşti cultivate sub presiune socială. Din primele cadre, preotul le alungă pe vrăjitoare, întrerupând astfel brusc profeţia şi suscitând şi mai mult interesul unui Macbeth sedus de posibilităţile sale politice viitoare. Tot preotul e cel care redactează scrisoarea către Lady Macbeth, devenind astfel indirect un martor informat al ascensiunii tiranului. Îl avertizează pe Macbeth de capcanele vrăjitoarelor, care promit atât de multe doar pentru a-l pierde (Welles atribuindu-i aici preotului replicile lui Banquo din Actul I, Scena 3: „That, trusted home,/ Might yet enkindle you unto the crown,/ Besides the thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange:/ And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,/ The instruments of darkness tell us truths,/ Win us with honest trifles, to betray's/ In deepest consequence." (I.3.124-130)[2], în film personajul lui Banquo, prezent la rândul lui în cadru, confirmându-i spusele în timp ce-şi face

[2] În traducere Ion Vinea: „Crezînd orbeşte,/ Poţi să te-aprinzi şi să rîvneşti la tron–/ De ce doar than de Cawdor? E ciudat!/ Ades ai beznei soli, ca să ne piardă/ Grăiesc cinstit, ne farmec' cu nimicuri/ Ducîndu-ne spre cel mai greu păcat…".

cruce, într-un *Amin* mut), dar continuă să scrie epistola, supunându-se pe cale ierarhică thanului de Glamis. În momentul descoperiri asasinării lui Duncan, în mijlocul confuziei generale, preotul are toate răspunsurile necesare pentru a determina care e natura reală a situației, dar e constrâns să tacă, Welles reprezentând astfel Binele ca pe o forță neglijabilă, cu o putere de influență infimă în fața imperativelor meschine ale organizării sociale. Nici preotul, nici vrăjitoarele nu pot de fapt vorbi explicit despre ceea ce le e rezervat muritorilor, ei nu pot determina sau hotărî cursul evenimentelor decât în măsura în care sunt aleși și crezuți, stabilind un raport de complicitate cu indivizii în cauză. În timpul asaltului lui Malcolm asupra palatului, Macbeth îl omoară pe preot, Orson Welles făcând și mai clară astfel, în ultimele minute ale filmului, transformarea interioară a antieroului, care a uscat pe deplin în el însuși tot „laptele omeneștii-duioșii" ("th' milk of human kindness") (I.5).

Deși focusul filmului e pe subiectivitatea acut inflamată a lui Macbeth, vândut forțelor Răului și prins într-o spirală a decăderii, regizorul sugerează discret, în câteva cadre-cheie, că întregul univers ficțional, această Scoție medievală aparent organizată în spiritul unui respect profund pentru regalitate și pentru ritualurile religioase stabilizatoare, ce pare să trăiască prin Macbeth un episod excepțional, cu atât mai monstruos, e de fapt doar un simulacru, în spatele acestui mod de organizare clocotind aceeași voracitate, aceeași cruzime și aceeași manie de a accesa și păstra pentru sine puterea absolută pentru cât mai mult timp. Astfel, deși Duncan nu e vizibil până în episodul vizitei sale la Inverness (Welles suprimând scenele anterioare din textul original pentru a-l prezenta pe regele scoțian exclusiv în raport direct cu Macbeth, ca instrument structural, declanșator al conflictului narativ), apariția sa la castelul thanului de Glamis relevă aspecte semnificative pentru modelul său de guvernare, în contradicție cu blândețea atribuită lui în textul shakespearian. Execuția thanului de Cawdor are loc cu câteva momente înaintea sosirii regelui. Aceiași supuși care au asistat la spânzurătoare asistă în prezența lui Duncan la o slujbă religioasă încheiată ritualic cu jurământul colectiv "Dost thou renounce Satan? and all his works?". Imediat după consumarea ritualului, Duncan se asigură că thanul de Cawdor a fost ucis, indicându-i-se în acest sens capul trădătorului, înfipt cât mai sus într-o țeapă, pildă sumbră pentru toți cei ce vor să-i calce pe urme. Dacă la Shakespeare, lui Duncan doar i se confirmă și i se relatează succint evenimentul, în filmul lui Orson Welles scena este reprezentată per se, indicând un anume grad de ipocrizie colectivă, modelată în conformitate cu duplicitatea regelui însuși, simultan pios și autoritar, generos și răzbunător. De aceea, nu este greu de presupus că slăbiciunea morală a lui Macbeth nu e de fapt un gest singular, ci poate fi în schimb văzută ca o verigă a unui lanț mai mare, format din nobili și monarhi la fel de susceptibili de a cădea în ispită. În acest sens, cadrul final susține simbolic această presupoziție: după înfrângerea lui Macbeth și încoronarea lui Malcolm, camera le surprinde pe cele trei vrăjitoare uitându-se din depărtare la castel și rostind profetic „Peace! - the charm's wound up."[3] (I.3.38), după care ecranul se întunecă, afișând în centru mesajul *The End.* Deplasând replica vrăjitoarelor din actul I în actul V, Orson Welles face aluzie astfel la natura ciclică a poveștii, anticipând în Malcolm un nou Macbeth, ilustrând cu atât mai convingător repetabilitatea istoriei și caracterul inepuizabil al Răului.

[3] Traducerea românească din 1988 a lui Ion Vinea („Gata, vraja e-nchegată") omite cuvântul *peace,* foarte important în calamburul plasat de regizor la finalul filmului. Dacă la Shakespeare, *peace* era folosit de vrăjitoare ca îndemn reciproc de a face liniște și a încheia ritualul demonic, în așteptarea victimelor, Macbeth și Banquo; la Welles, *peace* este resemantizat și se referă în schimb la ordinea generală restabilită prin îndepărtarea tiranului, pace temporară, iluzorie, care precede pur și simplu un nou episod sângeros.

Ce este cu adevărat original însă în apropierea lui Welles este inventarea unui dublu al lui Macbeth sub forma unei păpuşi de lut manipulate de vrăjitoare. Criticii au asociat-o cu o păpuşă voodoo, regizorul plasând strategic cadre paralele cu Macbeth şi cu dublura sa miniaturală în scenele-cheie ale poveştii: la soborul vrăjitoarelor din Actul I, când păpuşa e modelată propriu-zis; la încoronare şi în momentul decapitării tiranului. Fiecare gest decisiv este executat de două ori, atât în dimensiunea lui reală, cât şi în dimensiunea lui simbolică, subliniindu-se astfel ideea că Macbeth este supus şi controlat de forţele întunericului la fiecare pas. Chiar dacă asocierea nu e pe deplin în concordanţă cu datele istorice sau climatul general al epocii reprezentate, Orson Welles e cunoscut de altfel pentru predilecţia sa de a mixa constant referinţe eterogene la alte genuri despre alte timpuri (Lindley, 2001: 97). Mai mult decât atât, Welles a mai operat cu această asociere ideatică în 1936, când a montat un *Macbeth* neconvenţional pentru teatrul Lafayette din Harlem, spectacol de mare succes, cunoscut de atunci ca *Voodoo Macbeth*, însă în egală măsură şi controversat pentru distribuţia lui alcătuită exclusiv din actori de culoare. În filmul din 1948, această succesiune alegorică de cadre este folosită în final şi pentru a evita reprezentarea vizuală mult prea brutală a scenei decapitării aşa că expresia îngrozită a lui Macbeth dinaintea morţii este rapid succedată de imaginea păpuşii de lut, căreia vrăjitoarele îi taie capul într-un gest mimetic simultan.

Imaginea 1: *Decapitarea lui Macbeth*

Roman Polanski: *Macbeth* şi Marele Mecanism al Istoriei

Dacă la Orson Welles lumea este filtrată preponderent prin subiectivitatea delirantă a lui Macbeth, în ecranizarea din 1971 a lui Roman Polanski sunt urmărite, într-o notă cinică, relaţiile reciproce dintre Macbeth şi mediul său. Filmul face din tragedia thanului de Glamis un semnalment al cangrenei morale universale, o reprezentare pesimistă a ciclului Istoriei, tributară de altfel consideraţiilor critice ale compatriotului regizorului, criticul marxist Jan Kott, care a interpretat implicaţiile politice ale pieselor shakespeariene ca fiind subordonate unui mecanism crud al opresiunii umane (Marele Mecanism al Istoriei). Mai mult decât atât, însăşi biografia tulburătoare a lui Polanski a influenţat poate această grilă de lectură, regizorul confruntându-se de multe ori pe parcursul vieţii sale cu violenţa şi represiunea la cele mai înalte puncte de ardere: familia sa fiind marcată şi dezbinată de ororile Holocaustului; propria-i ţară de origine, Polonia, fiind devastată de două ori, întâi de nazişti, apoi de sovietici, iar în 1969, cu puţin timp

înainte de a se hotărî să se lanseze în proiectul *Macbeth*, soţia sa însărcinată în opt luni, actriţa Sharon Tate, a fost asasinată de criminalul Charles Manson şi de discipolii lui. Astfel, în aproprierea piesei *Macbeth*, Polanski desfiinţează ideea dualităţii Bine-Rău, făcând din forţele întunericului principiul definitoriu de funcţionare a universului ficţional, şterge referinţele religioase din textul-sursă, introduce multiple scene de violenţă grafică şi face din urcarea şi coborârea scărilor un laitmotiv al întregului film. Polanski foloseşte pentru unele scene specifice desfăşurate ori la Inverness, ori la Dunsinane, acelaşi castel, recognoscibil prin şirul de trepte exterioare care duc în primele secvenţe ale filmului la camera lui Duncan şi pe care ulterior se prăbuşeşte Macbeth înainte de a fi decapitat. De altfel, atât Macbeth, cât şi Lady Macbeth vor urca şi coborî trepte în repetate rânduri de-a lungul filmului, această acţiune repetată *ad nauseam* sugerând frenezia ascensiunilor şi prăbuşirilor politice care fac obiectul întregii istorii omeneşti. De exemplu, Lady Macbeth urcă scările exaltată în timp ce citeşte scrisoarea primită de la soţul ei şi le coboară ulterior pentru a-l întâmpina pe acesta din urmă după ce se întoarce de pe câmpul de luptă, proaspăt învestit cu titlul de than de Cawdor. Macbeth însuşi (interpretat de Jon Finch) îl opreşte pe Banquo pe scări, la jumătatea drumului, pentru a discuta despre plauzibilitatea profeţiilor vrăjitoarelor, le urcă pentru a se furişa în camera lui Duncan (tot aici derulându-se şi celebrul monolog „Is This a Dagger Which I See Before Me?" – II.1), le coboară pentru a-şi anunţa soţia de reuşita faptei sale şi le urcă din nou la câteva ore diferenţă pentru a-i conduce pe Lennox şi Macduff în camera regelui.

Imaginea 2: *Laitmotivul treptelor: (1) Asasinarea lui Duncan; (2) Decapitarea lui Macbeth.*

Polanski găseşte aşadar pe parcursul adaptării sale o varietate de metafore vizuale inspirate, echivalente retoricii nuanţate din textul-sursă. O altă astfel de imagine simbolică, plasată de două ori în film, este ursul înlănţuit, surprins prima oară într-o cuşcă, înconjurat de mulţime şi hărţuit cu un băţ trecut printre gratii, apoi, a doua oară, acelaşi urs, dar de data aceasta mort în urma asaltului câinilor (divertisment popular foarte răspândit în Anglia la acea vreme), lăsând o dâră de sânge în urma sa, este târât pe coridoarele palatului aproape imediat ce Macbeth a ordonat executarea asasinilor lui Banquo, asasini plătiţi şi ispitiţi cu promisiuni măreţe tot de el. La final, când Macbeth însuşi este încolţit de armata lui Malcolm, replica originală („They have tied me to a stake; I cannot fly,/ But, bear-like, I must fight the course" – V.7.1-2), preluată de Polanski exact aşa cum apare în textul-sursă, capătă un alt ecou, amplificând vulnerabilitatea tiranului.

Ecranizarea lui Polanski abundă în scene de violenţă grafică, împlinind pe deplin condiţia postulată de Jan Kott ca fiind indispensabilă oricărei adaptări sau aproprieri a piesei „Macbeth":

> Dar acest sînge nu poate fi spălat nici de pe mîini, nici de pe faţă, nici de pe junghere. *Macbeth* începe şi se sfîrşeşte cu un măcel. E din ce în ce mai mult sînge; toţi se bălăcesc în

> sînge. El inundă scena. Fără imaginea lumii inundată de sînge orice înscenare a lui *Macbeth* va fi totdeauna falsă. (1969: 86)

Cadavrele se insinuează de peste tot pe ecran, cel mai tulburător dintre toate cadrele fiind acela care surprinde corpurile mutilate ale copiilor lui Macduff. Sângele nu este însă la Polanski doar o dovadă materială a cruzimii umane, ci şi un indiciu metonimic a unei stări de spirit dominante, aşa explicându-se de pildă scena de după banchetul regal, în care Macbeth şi Lady Macbeth stau în pat, plănuind următoarea lovitură, scăldaţi în lumina insinuantă a răsăritului.

O altă intervenţie neconvenţională a lui Polanski în reprezentarea textului shakespearian este construcţia personajului feminin principal. Această variantă a lui Lady Macbeth (interpretată de Francesca Annis) este întruchiparea perfectă a replicii ei emblematice „Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,/ But be the serpent under't" (I.5.67-68). Mergând în direcţia deschisă în 1884, la Londra, de actriţa Sarah Bernhardt, care a interpretat pe scenă pentru prima oară, la acea vreme, o Lady Macbeth caracterizată de o sexualitate agresivă, Roman Polanski se detaşează de clişeele ferocităţii şi austerităţii sterile, conform cărora Lady Macbeth era în mod obişnuit prezentată, optând în schimb pentru imaginea unui complice feminin seducător. Spre deosebire însă de Sarah Bernhardt, Francesca Annis nu mizează pe un erotism intimidant, ci joacă, nu fără succes, cartea unei frumuseţi feciorelnice, o inocenţă amăgitoare care lucrează prin sugestie mai mult decât prin coerciţie ori şantaj. O scenă esenţială pentru relevarea duplicităţii personajului, de altfel o inserţie originală a regizorului, este dansul lui Lady Macbeth cu regele Duncan, în timpul vizitei acestuia din urmă la Inverness. În ciuda faptului că în urmă cu câteva minute complota cu soţul ei, punând la cale un regicid, această Lady Macbeth nu are nicio reţinere să zâmbească şi să flirteze discret cu cel ce în curând îi va fi victimă. Spre final, Polanski modifică relevanţa simbolică a acestui personaj, făcând din cadavrul reginei, abandonat în praful drumului, ignorat atât de Macbeth, cât şi de Macduff, personaje situate de altfel la extremele spectrului moral, dar împărtăşind în acest moment aceeaşi atitudine, un semnalment al dezintegrării universului ficţional.

Imaginea 3: *„O lume inundată de sânge"* (Kott)

Polanski este neobosit în găsirea soluţiilor estetice care deşi modifică, onorează şi potenţează textul shakespearian (printre aceste soluţii numărându-se şi dezvăluirea treptată, nu imediată, a identităţii fantomei lui Banquo; construirea lui Fleance ca un personaj mai vizibil în economia poveştii, integrat chiar în virtutea unei simetrii sumbre în coşmarurile lui Macbeth,

care-şi imaginează că e asasinat de fiul lui Banquo cu un pumnal, în somn, în aceeaşi manieră în care el l-a asasinat la rândul lui pe Duncan; a doua întâlnire cu vrăjitoarele e imaginată ca o conjuraţie demonică, populată de zeci de personaje secundare malefice care îşi unesc forţele întru amăgirea şi distrugerea lui Macbeth şi cadrul final controversat în care fratele mai mic al lui Malcolm, Donalbain, se îndreptă către peştera vrăjitoarelor pentru a-şi afla la rândul lui viitorul). În egală măsură, aceste modificări şi revizii reuşesc să creeze suspans şi răspunsuri emoţionale puternice în rândul publicului, în spiritul unei „vivid melodrama" (Kael, 1973: 400), dar ceea ce îi lipseşte aproprierii lui Polanski este sugestia vagă a posibilităţii restabilirii echilibrului moral, pe care de altfel nici Shakespeare nu a construit-o cu prea mare insistenţă, dar pe care a cultivat-o ca un subton necesar în mijlocul acelei lumi coşmareşti.

> Polanski converts what in Shakespeare was pathology into the normal state of affairs", thereby stripping the drama of its mystery, exaltation, and evil grandeur because *there is nothing to balance* the atrocities against. The effect is to cancel any depth or importance, and to send you out with nothing—no hope of peace, no belief that there could be even a period of order and justice.[4] (1973: 400)

Joel Coen: un *Macbeth* abstract

Dacă la Orson Welles şi Roman Polanski, aproprierea lui Shakespeare îşi asuma în întregime instrumentarul mediului cinematografic, ecranizarea recentă a lui Joel Coen din 2021, *The Tragedy of Macbeth* este un mixaj artificial între metodele teatrale clasice şi mijloacele expresive filmice. Deşi pelicula lui Orson Welles din 1948 este la rândul ei tot o producţie de studio, filmată *indoors,* cu decoruri construite de Welles însuşi, aceasta se aliniază obiectivului ei estetic principal, surprinzând încă o dată astfel senzaţia de claustrofobie a lumii ficţionale. La Joel Coen însă, decorurile proiectate în studio – înalte, ascuţite, generând acel efect de ecleraj bazat pe clarobscur specific filmelor expresioniste germane, filmul lui Coen fiind în mod voluntar realizat pe peliculă cinematografică de tip alb-negru – seamănă mai degrabă cu „o arhitectură à la de Chirico" (Brody, s.p.), nefăcând altceva decât să amplifice preţiozitatea sterilă a produsului final. Aventurându-se în primul proiect solo, fără colaborarea creativă a fratelui său, Ethan, Joel Coen şi-a autoimpus o misiune dificilă, căutând să-şi legitimeze virtuozitatea cinematografică prin asocierea cu Shakespeare, un standard *high culture* incontestabil. Totuşi, deşi prin *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, Joel Coen propune o ecranizare „curată", fără excese interpretative, întreaga peliculă e marcată de o anumită inhibare a mijloacelor expresive, nereuşind să capteze „zgomotul şi furia" textului-sursă.

Cu toate acestea, o reuşită remarcabilă a ecranizării lui Coen este reducerea vrăjitoarelor la un singur personaj, interpretat de Kathryn Hunter. Dacă la Polanski vrăjitoarele ajungeau să se multiplice într-o conjuraţie infernală, adunând zeci de personaje la un loc, la Coen, ele sunt esenţializate în identitatea volatilă a unui singur actant. În cadrele iniţiale, la primul contact al lui Macbeth cu forţele supranaturale, în timp ce-şi face profeţiile ispititoare în mijlocul mlaştinii, în apa dimprejur vrăjitoarea se reflectă dublu, creându-se vizual, pentru scurt timp, un triunghi

[4] [Polanski transformă ceea ce în Shakespeare era pură patologie într-o stare normală de lucruri, tocmai astfel lipsind tragedia de misterul, exaltarea şi grandoarea ei malefică pentru că acum nu mai există nimic care să contrabalanseze toate aceste atrocităţi. Efectul este anularea oricărei profunzimi ori relevanţe, lăsându-te fără nimic – fără speranţa păcii, fără credinţa că ar putea veni vreodată un timp al ordinii şi dreptăţii.] (traducere proprie)

malefic. Reflecţiile se desprind apoi de suprafaţa lichidă care le-a generat, materializându-se şi flancând-o pe cea dintâi vrăjitoare. Astfel, Coen surprinde cu o precizie vizuală ingenioasă caracterul halucinatoriu al viziunilor lui Macbeth, suspendate la limita dintre coşmar şi proiecţie subconştientă.

Imaginea 4: *Identitatea volatilă a vrăjitoarei/vrăjitoarelor*

La fel ca Polanski, Coen încearcă să propună şi alte metafore vizuale originale, pornind de la sugestiile textului-sursă, dar efectul e unul rizibil, sufocat fie de kitsch, fie de un sentimentalism superficial. Pumnalul fictiv ce pare că-l îndeamnă pe Macbeth să comită regicidul se dovedeşte a fi mânerul unei uşi masive, printre episoadele narative sunt intercalate cadre strânse în care e surprinsă căderea sacadată fie a unei picături de sânge, fie a unei picături de apă (Coen exploatând astfel discret, dar nu întru totul convingător, frica lui Macbeth de a nu mai putea fi curăţat de crimele sale niciodată), iar codrul Birnam este reprezentat metonimic de o ploaie de frunze, care-l asaltează pe Macbeth odată ce deschide una dintre ferestrele castelului înaintea luptei cu Macduff. Păsările negre, corbi sau ciori, sunt obsesiv, deşi nu complet nejustificat, utilizate pe tot parcursul filmului, indicând ori prezenţa vrăjitoarelor, ori apariţia fantomei lui Banquo, fiind astfel percepute implicit ca mesageri oculţi.

O altă victorie compoziţională a adaptării lui Coen este personajul secundar Ross, o sinteză perfect echilibrată între construcţia lui Welles (unde Ross e înlocuit de un preot pios) şi aceea a lui Polanski (unde nobilul e un agent util şi versatil, motivat de propriile-i ambiţii, subordonat nu atât regelui, cât Puterii, în orice formă şi sub orice monarh s-ar materializa ea), dar în cazul lui Coen, Ross, deşi îmbrăcat într-un costum medieval asemănător rasei preoţeşti, funcţionează ca un sol machiavelic între lumea de dincolo şi lumea măcinată de violenţă a muritorilor. Regizorul îl plasează din proprie iniţiativă, îndepărtându-se voluntar de textul shakespearian, în cel puţin două scene-cheie, redimensionându-i astfel influenţa în economia poveştii. Ross e cel care îl prinde din urmă pe Fleance, imediat ce tatăl său, Banquo, e asasinat şi rictusul satisfăcut al nobilului anticipează o potenţială crimă. De abia în cadrul final, când Malcolm a fost uns rege, Coen dezambiguizează situaţia dramatică, înfăţişându-ni-l pe Ross călare, grăbit să-l ia pe Fleance de la bătrânul căruia i l-a lăsat în grijă în tot acest timp. El devine astfel un agent pe deplin conştient al profeţiilor vrăjitoarelor, măsurându-şi acţiunile în funcţie de acel tempo mistic al Istoriei, acel ritm derutant care îi înalţă şi îi prăbuşeşte pe toţi regii la momentul

potrivit. De asemenea, când Lady Macbeth priveşte rătăcită în capul scărilor degringolada din palat dinaintea măcelului ce are să-i anunţe căderea, Ross se apropie de ea zâmbind şi camera o surprinde câteva secunde mai târziu prăbuşită şi inertă în cămaşa de noapte albă, regizorul problematizând astfel cauza morţii ei, în textul lui Shakespeare indicându-ni-se de altfel în mod incontestabil o sinucidere.

Unde eşuează însă Coen în mod fundamental este reprezentarea cuplului de antagonişti, atât Macbeth (interpretat de Denzel Washington), cât şi Lady Macbeth (interpretată de Frances McDormand) afişând pe tot parcursul filmului o expresie rece, calculată, complet lipsită de impetuozitatea unor manii şi ambiţii autodistructive, declamând teatral, corect, precis, dar fără niciun fel de implicare emoţională. De pildă, în scena emblematică a somnambulismului, în mijlocul delirului, Lady Macbeth îi fixează pentru o clipă pe doctor şi pe doamna din suita ei cu intenţionalitatea unui om conştient, înfiorându-i. În ciuda notei originale care răstoarnă într-o anumită măsură coordonatele personajului original shakespearian, care în această nouă lumină poate fi suspectată şi de o simulare voluntară a nebuniei ca mijloc de a se elibera de secretele întunecate pe care le-a tăinuit atât de mult timp, o astfel de Lady Macbeth pierde din patosul unui personaj tragic, diminuând impactul întregii poveşti şi compromiţând-o la o simplă replică palidă a textului-sursă, un nereuşit exerciţiu narcisist de confirmare a propriei puteri expresive.

Concluzie

Macbeth, cu forţa lui incredibilă de iradiere în spaţiul inepuizabil al adaptărilor şi aproprierilor Shakespeare, se dovedeşte încă o dată un text elastic, încă relevant, permiţând într-o oarecare măsură, în spiritul logicii lui interne, revizuiri felurite. Fie că vorbim de Welles, de Polanski sau de Coen, figura tiranului medieval a ajuns să reprezinte mai mult decât o veche şi perpetuă răfuială dintre Bine şi Rău, el exercitând de fapt acea fascinaţie hipnotică pe care ne-o trezeşte orice poveste care reuşeşte să ne apropie de un adevăr despre noi înşine, pe care până atunci nu am îndrăznit decât să-l refuzăm.

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FILMOGRAFIE:

Macbeth (Orson Welles, USA, 1948)
Macbeth (Roman Polanski, USA, 1971)
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Where Does Pip Migrate to? Unexpected Parallels in Lloyd Jones's *Mister Pip* and Adamson's *Mr. Pip*

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This article explores the neo-Victorian novel *Mister Pip* (2006), written by Lloyd Jones, and Andrew Adamson's adaptation for the cinema, *Mr. Pip*, which was released in 2012. We trace connections between these works and the Victorian novel *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens (1861). Indeed, the novel and the film can be regarded as ways of (re)discovering and (re)recreating the Victorian novel. More specifically, we look into the parallelisms that can be established between Dickens's character Pip and the different characters in Jones's novel and Adamson's film as we explore the intertextual ties that allow the reader to make journeys between contexts which are geographically, temporarily, and culturally distant. We also analyze the metafictional elements in *Mister Pip* and *Mr. Pip* in order to account for the self-reflexive aspects of these works. We show the ways by which the metafictional strategies employed by the narrative voice reveal the writing process. Jones's novel and Adamson's film tell stories of migration of different sorts (migrating into the past, migrating geographically, migrating socially, and migrating culturally among others). In the following pages we reflect on these migrations in the hope that we can answer the question "Where does Pip migrate to?".

Keywords

***Great Expectations*; *Mister Pip*; neo-Victorianism; film adaptation; metafiction; migrations.**

Mister Pip, the novel by New Zealand writer Lloyd Jones was first published in 2006. Six years later, the film adaptation *Mr. Pip* was released. New Zealand film director, producer and screenwriter Andrew Adamson was responsible for the script and the direction of the film. The novel and the film narrate Matilda's childhood spent in Bougainville, an island in the Pacific Ocean, in the 1990s when the characters' lives are affected by a brutal civil war. During such hopeless times, Matilda, a thirteen-year-old black girl, is introduced to Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*, a novel which fascinates her, and which shapes her life and the fates of the people around her. Through constant references to this 19th century novel, both Jones's text and Adamson's film can be perceived as "self-consciously engaged with the act of (re)interpretation, (re)discovery and (re)vision concerning the Victorians" (Heilmann and Llewellyn, 2010: 4). Matilda and many other inhabitants listen to, analyze and turn to the Dickensian novel looking for hope or distraction. The literary text, as a result, becomes a means to escape from the horrors of the war.

This paper is organized in two parts. The first seeks to examine *Mister Pip* as a neo-Victorian novel that goes back to 19th century England in order to shed light on the present in a journey that allows the reader to draw connections between two very distant contexts, both temporally and geographically. This analysis purports to explain how *Mister Pip* turns out to be a "hybrid combination displaying unexpected parallels and a productive dialogue across and about temporal barriers", to borrow the words used by Gutleben (2022: 1) in his description of the neo-Victorian poetics of exhumation which resuscitates the past and blends it with the present. The second part analyzes the film adaptation *Mr. Pip* and explores the connections between the novel and the film and how the film version sometimes reflects, and other times diverts from the written text.

Given the common ground that can be established between neo-Victorianism and Postmodernism, attention is also given to the ways in which the metafictional strategies employed by the narrative voice reveal the writing process. Following Patricia Waugh, a metafictional text draws attention to its own status as an artefact posing questions about the relationship between fiction and reality (1984: 2). Therefore, given the development of several events which are intertextually connected to Pip's narrative, it can be claimed that text is self-reflexive. Above all, the text reflects on its literary nature when the metafictional frame is revealed: Matilda, no longer a child in Bougainville, discloses that she has written the whole text as a therapeutic means to overcome depression.

Mister Pip **by Lloyd Jones**

Jones's novel opens with an epigraph by Umberto Eco: "Characters migrate", which refers to the idea that some characters leave the page and seem to acquire a life of their own outside the texts where they were "born". If that is so, where does Pip go? Pip, the Dickensian orphan character, abandons his hard life in a country village and sees his "great expectations" materialize unexpectedly. He leaves behind poverty, an abusive sister, and a blacksmith apprenticeship in order to receive a gentleman's education and large sums of money in the city. *Great Expectations* narrates Pip's migration from the country to London, as well as "from one social level to another", as Mr. Watts, the character of the teacher in *Mister Pip* explains to his students on the South Pacific Island. As a *bildungsroman*, the Victorian novel describes how he finally grows up to become a wealthy gentleman.

In the 21st century, Lloyd Jones forces Pip to migrate once more, from Victorian London to the isolated Bougainville, Papua New Guinea. Indeed, as the novel unfolds, unexpected parallels can be drawn between Pip and several characters suggesting the possibility that Pip inhabits each of them, thus blending past and present. In this context, it becomes difficult to determine where exactly Pip migrates to since he seems to temporarily slip inside the skin of Matilda, Matilda's closest friend, her teacher, and her father.

Pip is introduced to Matilda and her classmates by Mr. Watts, the last white man living in Bougainville. Mr. Watts, who is himself fascinated by *Great Expectations*, starts reading the novel aloud in class one chapter a day, in a routine that captivates his audience. It is interesting to note that Mr. Watts is not a trained teacher, but he decides to occupy the teaching post and share the little knowledge he has with the children after the former teacher flees the island in the face of the impending civil war. Still, one thing he is certain of: *Great Expectations* is "the greatest novel by the greatest English writer of the nineteenth century" (Jones, 2007: 22).

Matilda considers Pip her friend after listening to the first chapter: "I felt like I had been spoken to by this boy Pip. This boy who I couldn't seem to touch but knew by ear. I had

found a new friend" (24). Their similar circumstances draw them close: they are both children, they know about death, they have both lost their fathers and Pip also lost his mother and most of his siblings. There are also some similarities in their upbringing: Pip is raised by a strict sister and Matilda's mother, the village priest Dolores, is quite harsh and controlling as well.

Although imperceptible to her senses, Pip becomes real to Matilda. His strong presence in Matilda's life turns him into a real companion. She wants to tell her mom about him, she writes his name on the shore, she considers him dearer to her than some of her relatives, a fact which makes her mom jealous. She even tries to imitate Pip's efforts to discover more about his own father. Matilda confesses: "Encouraged by Pip's example I tried to build a picture of my own dad. I found some examples of his handwriting. He wrote in small capital letters. What did that say about him?" (26).

Like a true friend, Pip provides Matilda with safety and certainty, both of which are rarities on the island, as its peaceful daily life is interrupted by the arrival of "redskins" in helicopters, who attack the islanders in savage ways again and again. If Matilda considers Pip a friend, it is because he becomes truly alive for her, to such an extent that she can feel his breath. In other words, the Dickensian character is reborn in very vivid terms. Pip becomes alive again when poetically recontextualized in the 1990s war-torn Bougainville. Gluteben (2022) refers to this process as a renaissance which brings the past back to life in an operation that is characteristic of neo-Victorian narratives.

However, Pip and Matilda do not "remain friends" as the Victorian character slips inside Matilda's skin and they seem to become one. As events unfold, the parallelism between Matilda and Pip gradually becomes more noticeable to the reader and to Matilda herself, who decides to "perceive and interpret her life in the light of the Dickensian prototext" (Colomba, 2017: 277). Matilda's determination to merge with Pip does not let readers miss a reference to *Great Expectations* as she constantly makes the parallels explicit.

Despite the striking differences between them, the narrative voice directs the reader's attention towards Pip and Matilda's shared features. For instance, they both become close to an adult figure, Miss Havisham and Mr. Watts respectively, two powerful characters who are willing to lend them a hand when necessary. One day, as Matilda is walking to Mr. Watts's home, she feels as nervous as Pip on his way to see Miss Havisham. Matilda writes: "As I made my way there, I felt a bit like Pip approaching Satis House" (Jones, 2007: 134). This passage encourages a parallelism between Miss Havisham and Mr. Watts, an identification which is reinforced by Matilda later in the novel, when she discovers that Mr. Watts, like Miss Havisham, is stuck in time as he is forced to repeat the Queen of Sheba ritual in order to comfort his beloved Grace.

Both Pip and Matilda are embarrassed when visited in their own environments by the people who have raised them. Joe, who misses the child, visits Pip in his new flat in London and his mere presence upsets Pip, who disapproves of his clothes, his language, and his manners. Likewise, Matilda is ashamed of her mother when she visits the classroom in order to share her religious knowledge with the children. Although she criticizes Pip's behavior, she ends up making the same mistake. "I was already ashamed by her words, but I also knew her anger didn't really have to do with Mr. Watts' own religious beliefs or lack of. What made her blood run hot was this white boy Pip and his place in my life" (Jones, 2007: 79). In vain Dolores seeks to impose her religious worldview on Matilda and remains reluctant to accept her daughter's engagement with Mr. Watts and *Great Expectations*, a book which, as far as she knows, can provide her daughter with examples of immoral behavior.

The literariness of Matilda's interpretation of the world around her allows John Thieme to call *Mister Pip* "a wonderful work of metafiction" (Thieme, 2007: 55. The narrator's account of events shows awareness of the literary context and intertextuality becomes a metafictional strategy whose frequent and playful use allows us to place this novel in the intersection between neo-Victorianism and Postmodernism.

Although this is most easily appreciated in the first half of the novel, as Thieme suggests, unexpected parallels between the Dickensian world and Matilda's contemporary world do not cease to emerge. Even at desperate times, Matilda identifies her misery with Pip's misfortune and his great escape from it. When facing death during the flood, she clings on to *Great Expectations*, which becomes, once again, a source of hope as she sees Mr. Jaggers in the log that keeps her alive: "What would you call a savior? The only one I knew went by the name of Mr. Jaggers. And so it was natural for me to name my savior, this log, after the man who had saved Pip's life" (217). The naturalization of the equation between a log and a literary character is an instance of the playful tone characteristic of many postmodern works (Bentley, 2008 and Finney, 2006, among others) In this case, the intertextual reference provides some comic relief, possibly drawing a smile on readers' faces.

The log is not the only Mr. Jaggers on the island. Reading the novel gives Matilda tools to reinterpret her own past and she finds another Mr. Jagger in the Pacific Matilda writes "The Mr. Jaggers in my father's life was his boss, a mining engineer, one of the many contracted." (150) He was the one who gave her father the job that got him out of Bougainville before the civil war broke out. In the light of the violent events that unfolded, this man is now perceived as his savior. However, this view is not shared by Dolores, who despises her husband's boss for triggering his transformation into a white man.

Thus, towards the end of the book, Pip seems to have migrated into Matilda's father, not only because they are both saved by Mr. Jaggers, in Matilda's view, but also because they abandon their own family. Very much like Pip, who does not go back to his strict sister, his dear Joe or patient Biddy as he becomes a gentleman, Matilda's dad does not return to Bougainville. Matilda often thinks of his migration, which is again paralleled to Pip's in her mind: "Away from class I found myself wondering about the life my dad was leading, and what he had become. I wondered if he was a gentleman, and whether he had forgotten all that had gone into making him." (55)

However, this parallelism is only ephemeral given that Mr. Laimo is not ashamed of his daughter, despite his nearly complete transformation into a white man, as Matilda sees it. On the contrary, he is proud of all the achievements of his "champ" as he likes to call her. Clearly, he has left the island and its customs behind, not his family.

There is another unexpected parallel still to be discussed: Pip can also be found within Mr. Watts, whose identity also blends with Miss Havisham's, as mentioned above, and with Mr. Dickens, as Mr. Watts refers to the celebrated Victorian author. Mr. Watts is introduced as a mysterious character who habitually walks around the island carrying his wife posing as Sheba. This ritual puzzles Matilda and the rest of the villagers for years.

At first, the only similarity between Pip and Mr. Watts seems to lie in the sound of their nicknames: Pip and Pop Eye, but it is later discovered that Mr. Watts creates himself anew, just as Pip reinvents himself in London and enjoys being called Handle. Since Mr. Watts migrates from Australia to Bougainville for his wife's sake, he needs to recreate himself in order to fit in an indigenous society. He is an outsider on the island in the same way that Pip is an outsider in London society when he gets there. Gradually, Mr. Watts's emotional isolation vanishes as his

bond with the local people becomes stronger. Despite racial, religious, and cultural differences, he shows respect for the local culture when he invites every parent to teach the local children at school. He attentively listens to explanations on topics as varied as the color blue, braids and killing octopuses. Towards the end of his life, the whole island seems moved by his story as they are all summoned to listen to his compelling narrative.

Another feature shared by Pip and Mr. Watts is that they both become objects of Matilda's devotion and affection as she tries to enter their souls and become closer to them. This is how Matilda explains her determination to relate to them: "He had given us Pip, and I had come to know this Pip as if he were real and I could feel his breath on my cheek. I had learned to enter the soul of another. Now I tried to do the same with Mr. Watts" (59).

Her will to bond with Mr. Watts and Pip is still ardent even as an adult. Once she is physically away from Bougainville, she goes back to her dear friends. On the one hand, she reads and rereads *Great Expectations* so fervently that she becomes a scholar on Dickens. She also tries to learn as much as possible about Mr. Watts. As she is still puzzled by all aspects of his life, but mainly about his ritual walk wearing a red nose and pulling Grace in a cart, she visits Mr. Watts's first wife, and she can recover interesting bits and pieces of his life in order to write about him.

The metafictional tendency present in the novel is evidence of how neo-Victorian fiction needs "to transform the Victorian conventions within their contemporary narratives" as stated by Louisa Hadley (2010: 29). Textual self-reference can be perceived in Matilda's revelation of her writing process, more precisely, when she proudly refers to her ability to literarily recreate the person she admires, even before she discloses all the details about her text. "I have found I can reassemble Mr. Watts at will and whenever I like, and my account so far" (Jones, 2007: 204). As she can recreate him, she is no longer shocked nor devastated by his loss. Now, as an adult, she can find comfort and hope in writing, as she could find them while reading during her childhood.

Her account of Mr. Watts builds a literary character who can be considered an enigma. His chameleonic ability to change from one social role to another renders him both mysterious and worthy of love, respect and admiration, as he attempts at providing them with whatever they need.

> Otherwise, Mr. Watts was as elusive as ever. He was whatever he needed to be, what we asked him to be. Perhaps there are lives like that – they pour into whatever space we have made ready for them to fill. We needed a teacher, Mr. Watts became that teacher. We needed a magician to conjure up other worlds, and Mr. Watts had become that magician. When we needed a savior, Mr. Watts had filled that role. When the redskins required a life, Mr. Watts had given himself. (246)

Mr. Watts's death is here interpreted by Matilda as an act of heroism and self-sacrifice, which is achieved when he assumes Pip's identity and surrenders himself to the "redskins", who feel threatened by Pip's charisma and cannot understand he is not an actual person. In other words, the parallel between Pip and Mr. Watts brings tragic consequences. This view coincides with Janet M. Wilson's: "Mr. Watts's punishment for identifying himself as Mr. Pip in an attempt to save the villagers from being massacred is to be shot and fed to the pigs" (2012: 226).

Just as Matilda can bring Mr. Watts back to life, Mr. Watts can bring *Great Expectations* back to life. By blending the events in which Pip takes part with events from his own life, he can be paralleled not only with him but also with the novelist. He is as creative as Mr. Dickens because he rewrites the canonical text in the speeches delivered in installments, night after night, to the rambos and the rest of the population of the island, who seem to be spellbound. As pointed out by Gutleben (2022), in neo-Victorian fiction, the Victorian past is resuscitated, and a fresh breath can be felt coming out of it.

Similarly, Mr. Watts's students rewrite *Great Expectations* after the destructive fire started by the "redskins", and the canonical novel is also brought back to life. Remembering an incident, a word, an image becomes a source of joy, and proof of the text's vitality. It also gives the children a purpose, a mission to accomplish while their region is being torn apart by civil war. By bringing back the past – the canonical text in this case –, the narrative voice shows how the past "continues to be re-worked, legitimated, and preserved for posterity" (Kholke & Gutleben, 2010: 22).

The Dickensian text is re-worked through the children's rewriting in class and at home, in Mr. Watts's oral narrative and Matilda's novel. Past preservation for posterity is also identified as a neo-Victorian concern by Kate Mitchell, whose statement on neo-Victorian fiction fits the analysis of Jones's text. Here, *Great Expectations* is offered "as a cultural memory, to be remembered, and imaginatively re-created, not revised or understood" (2010: 7).

The final exposure of the metafictional frame becomes the biggest re-creational act, when the willing suspension of disbelief is shattered after confirming that the character herself has been writing all along. Matilda needs to re-live her childhood engagement with *Great Expectations* while writing to overcome depression and heal herself.

Surprisingly, "even after undergoing so many brutal events, Matilda does not associate Dickens with negative experiences" as pointed out by Rafał Liczkowski (2017: 241). On the contrary, all throughout the account of her childhood, Matilda focuses on friendship, comfort, and relief. They are brought to her by Pip and his memory. Nostalgia, then, becomes "a creative tool for remembering the past and mapping present identities", as stated by Ann Colley (quoted by Mitchell, 2010: 6). Once again, she needs to reassert her identity in the light of Pip's, just as she did as a child: "Pip was my story, even if I was once a girl, and my face black as the shining night. Pip is my story, and in the next day I would try where Pip had failed. I would try to return home" (Jones, 2007: 257).

***Mr. Pip*, the film**

Like all films which are based on books, *Mr. Pip*, written and directed by Andrew Adamson and starred by Hugh Laurie, offers a reading, an angle and an interpretation of Jones's novel. As Khalid Alqadi points out, "Whereas in literature the reader fills in the blanks himself, imagining the space and the characters, cinema provides the audience with ready-made characters, in blood and flesh, and a definite outline of space" (2015: 42). Consequently, in the film version, the question of where Pip migrates to may be thought to have slightly different answers, which we explore in this section.

The identification between Matilda and Pip is a central element in the film, and the main events that contribute to this identification – Matilda's introduction to the book in class, Mr. Watts's rendering of the novel aloud, Dolores's displays of disapproval of the book and its morals, Matilda's protection of the book, and the inscription on the beach – are all present in the film version. However, the subtle processes by which the two characters seem to blend on

the pages of the novel, are presented rather differently here. In *Mr. Pip*, rather than a ubiquitous, all-pervasive presence, Pip is presented "in the flesh" as an imaginary friend that is conjured up at different times, sometimes in scenes where Matilda bears witness to events in Pip's life and other times when he comes to inhabit her world.

Adamson realizes a series of interesting interpretative and cinematic choices for the character of Pip. For one, the Pip that Matilda imagines is black, though in the context of the novel she knows perfectly well that the character in Dickens's *Great Expectations* is white, which is one of the reasons why her mother shows such resistance against the book. In the film, Pip – like all the other characters from Dickens's novel – has the physiognomy of the islanders, and this is yet another way to materialize the deep connection between the two characters. Despite being black, Pip appears in English settings (a London city street and the cemetery, among others) although the streets are sandy and there are palm trees. Also, Pip wears English clothes but the colors are the striking vibrant colors of the island. The combination of elements from both cultures shows that this hybridization is a deliberate choice and not a product of Matilda's ignorance of English white culture.

Pip appears in the film for the first time when Mr. Watts begins to read from *Great Expectations* in class. Matilda can see herself watching the scene where Pip encounters the convict, who is also black in Matilda's mind and who will become Pip's benefactor later in his life. In this first encounter, Matilda is wearing a dress after the English fashion of the time, her hair is up and she is contemplating the graves of Pip's five dead siblings. The boy appears behind a tree and tells her about the tragedy of losing them so young. In the middle of the conversation, the convict comes running towards Pip, who tells Matilda to hide in what constitutes his first display of protection towards her. While the convict makes his demands, Matilda hides behind Pip's father's grave and seems to become aware of the loss they have in common. She is brought back to reality by a question from the class about the meaning of a word in the text, and she seems to emerge from behind the desk as Matilda, the character in her apparent daydream emerges from behind the tombstone. After this encounter, Matilda's strong identification begins to take form and she wants to tell her mother all about her new friend. Matilda and Pip meet again shortly afterwards, as the convict is arrested and sent to Australia in exile. This entails the second knot in the chain of events and situations that bring them together: "My father is also in Australia", she tells her new friend.

From that point onwards, Pip becomes a friend, confidant, and savior who will pop up at different points in her life and narrative. In time, Matilda's appearance in these imaginings becomes more and more European in her attire and the way her hair is done. It is interesting to note that this transformation mirrors the change in Pip's predicament and personality, and he finds himself living a new life in London. In a new spell of imagination, Matilda runs across Pip in the sandy streets of the London of her imaginings and finds him cold and distant. Pip goes by a new name now and is on his way to meet Estella, the woman of his dreams. In this section of the film, the plot is taken by the idea of identity and Mr. Watts tells the class: "No other person, in all of the world's history has used your voice to say your name. It only belongs to you and no one can take that away from you". These words echo Matilda's own crisis of identity, torn between her mother, a central figure in the life of the village and her father who has fled to Australia looking for better prospects and has been living like a white man since. After her mother is raped and brutally murdered on the island, Matilda goes to Australia and moves in with her father. This dramatic change in circumstances is shown in the film almost without any conflict and we can see Matilda be examined by a white doctor, take a plane, meet

her father after years and look at the house and its objects only in mild surprise. She sleeps in her bed soundly (although she has slept on the floor her whole life) and we see her get out of her father's truck in a school uniform and shoes as she arrives in a school full of white teenagers in the following scene, all of which she seems to take in her stride.

Pip appears again standing next to Matilda and sharing the grief with her as her mother is murdered by the "redskins". The scene is quite different from the other encounters in that it only lasts a split second and neither Matilda nor Pip say a word. In the scene, both characters are standing on the beach, looking out to the sea and for once Pip's clothes are sober and light-colored. Shortly after, we see Matilda lying on the floor of her hut looking at the pictures of her father while Pip tries to get her attention. In silence, Matilda rejects him. As spectators we understand that she blames him for Dolores's and Mr. Watts's deaths. However, Pip redeems himself when, sometime later, he saves Matilda from drowning in the ocean. Though in Jones's novel it is Mr. Jaggers that Matilda sees in the log she holds onto, in the film version it is Pip that appears once again to protect her. This marks the sudden shift of fate by which, like Pip's, Matilda's circumstances change and she finds herself on her way to Australia and her father.

Pip appears for the last time when Matilda travels to London after learning that Mr. Watts has left her half of his apartment in that city, in a turn of events which is different from Jones's novel. Once in London, she visits emblematic places related to Dickens and *Great Expectations* and she meets Mr. Watts's white wife, Joan Watts. Like in the novel, during this visit, Matilda gets to know a different Tom Watts, one who was an actor and who fell in love with a black actress he shared the stage with. These discoveries about Mr. Watts and Grace show a new parallelism with Pip. For the first time the mystery behind Mr., Watts's previous life outside the island is revealed and Matilda has a new understanding of the transforming migration that led him to Grace's island, Bougainville. At the same time, we discover a new Grace as well, one that was an actress for a living and that, as Joan Watts recalls, "was always laughing". Joan also learns something during the encounter as she hears that Mr. Watts, whom she remembers as a weak man and a coward, was, in Matilda's own description, "always a gentleman".

In the midst of these revelations, Pip appears in front of Matilda one last time. This time, unlike all the others, Matilda is wearing her own clothes and Pip admits that, for him, Mr. Dickens was a teacher who lived on an island in the South Pacific. They embrace and the story seems to come full circle with Matilda making amends and finding peace with Pip. She cries in his arms while Mr. Watts's voice reads a passage from the Dickensian novel that he read to the class when she was still a child: "Heaven knows we need never be ashamed of our tears, for they are rain upon the blinding dust of earth, overlaying our hard hearts. I was better after I had cried, than before – more sorry, more aware of my own ingratitude, more gentle" (Dickens, 2002: 157). The scene is transformed and Matilda and Pip are back in London as she sees him off. Matilda is in her very English garments and hair once again while Mr. Watts's voice keeps reading from the novel: "We changed again, and yet again, and it was now too late and too far to go back, and I went on. And the mists had all solemnly risen now, and the world lay spread before me" (157). It is their goodbye.

Another identification that is only suggested in the film is Matilda's transformation into a writer, something she has in common with Mr. Dickens. This transformation begins when Mr. Watts's volume of *Great Expectations* is lost, after which Matilda begins to re-write the story in a notebook and though she is not shown as a professional writer in the film, writing has become a transforming force in her life.

As Matilda becomes close to Pip, Mr. Watts comes to be identified with Dickens. The connection makes perfect sense, as Mr. Watts brings Pip to life for the villagers. So, in a violent scene where the officials from Papua New Guinea start asking questions about Pip in the thought that he might be a rebel, one of them asks Mr. Watts whether he is Dickens, to which the teacher's answer is "Yes". At this point, his identification with Pip is not made explicit in the film. It is not until later, when Mr. Watts is having an intimate conversation with Matilda about life and literature that he confesses that *Great Expectations* allowed him to change his life and reinvent himself. This scene seems to hint at Mr. Watts's identification with Pip, who makes a new life for himself and this connection between the two characters is confirmed at the end of his life when he is about to be executed. When the soldiers come back to the island, determined to find what they think is a rebel that goes by the name Pip, the teacher assumes his identity and quotes the beginning of the novel: "My father's family name being Pirrip, and my Christian name Philip, my infant tongue could make of both names nothing longer or more explicit than Pip. So, I called myself Pip, and came to be called Pip" (Dickens, 2002: 3). Mr. Watts is immediately shot dead, cut into pieces and fed to the pigs. Pip's migration into Mr. Watts is complete and the price is his own life.

In the first part of this paper, we suggested that, within the context of Jones's novel, Pip can also be seen as migrating into Mr. Laimo, Matilda's father. However, as Gualda (2011) points out, a film cannot be a mere copy of its literary counterpart, but is an autonomous, independent art form which retains its own characteristics and motivations. As it is, this identification is considerably less direct in the film as there are no explicit references to any connections between Mr. Laimo and *Great Expectations*, even if he has made a radical change in his life and circumstances. It is almost as if, in the context of the film, all the identifications between the characters and the novel seem to go back to Matilda's island.

Closing remarks

The analysis of Pip's migration into 20th century Papua New Guinea allows us to find a multiplicity of satisfactory answers to the original concern of this paper: Where does Pip migrate to?

It can confidently be said that, within Lloyd Jones's novel, Pip migrates into Matilda's "imaginary" friend, but also into Matilda herself. In addition, Mr. Watts and Mr. Laimo are definitely other possible destinations. Like other postmodern works of art, Jones's novel does not provide readers with a definite answer to this question. It rather invites readers to reflect upon migration and how it triggers unexpected parallels between the past and the present, between 19th century characters and 21st century characters. Indeed, through these parallels, *Great Expectations* is recreated by Lloyd Jones and rediscovered by Mister Pip's readers and Mr. Pip's audience.

When one considers the novel and the film, we can see that the past interacts with the present as the whole novel is re-worked and re-membered for posterity with every creative retelling of Pip's misfortunes and adventures. In other words, despite the differences between Lloyd Jones's novel and Adamson's film, *Great Expectations* is resuscitated by both through the characters of Matilda, her classmates and Mr. Watts, Matilda's own Mr. Dickens. This is consistent with neo-Victorian poetics of exhumation which raises "the problem of creating newness out of oldness, life out of death" (Gutleben, 2022: 15). Pip is given a new voice as he wanders through the Pacific and faces hardship once again, but now in 20th century Papua New Guinea.

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Life Wins in the West. Agnieszka Holland's East-European Interpretation of *The Secret Garden*

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The author of this essay interprets Agnieszka Holland's cinematographic adaptation of Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* as a work of an East-European creator musing on the essence of Western civilisation and comments on it in the context of the present-day questioning of the European unity, values, and standards in Polish culture. In the analysis of Holland's cinematographic version of the novel, a special relevance is given to cultural (in)visibility of the dangers of pregnancy and childbirth. The East-West divide is interpreted in terms of divergent conceptualisations of the major human transformative actions: work and sacrifice. In the multimodal idiom of Holland's film, the music composed by Zbigniew Preisner occupies a special place. The East-European interpretation of the children's classic promotes a vision of Englishness (treated as a *pars pro toto* exemplification of the broader concept of "the West") as a space of resilience and triumphant life, against manipulative messages presenting the West as a space of corruption and "culture of death".

Keywords

***The Secret Garden*; Agnieszka Holland; European values; Western civilization; culture of death.**

Justification of the Topic of Reflection

Several decades ago, George Steiner mused, in *Real Presences*, on the monstrous potential of proliferation inscribed in the critical discourse: "we are at liberty to say anything, to say what we will about anything, about everything and about nothing" (1989: 53). The perspective of scholarship for scholarship's sake is an ever-present menace; even more so, the possibility of defending erroneous aesthetical and ethical choices. What criteria make one topic more important than the other? What may justify a return to a work or a problem that had already been discussed? Certainly, Agnieszka Holland's cinematographic adaptation of Frances Hodgson Burnett's novel *The Secret Garden* is a work of great beauty, justifying a study – even a repeated one – because of the mastery of artistic means. Is this a sufficient reason? In 1993, Agnieszka Holland's film was a major achievement of Polish culture in its struggle for transnational recognition, waged in the aftermath of the collapse of the communist system. Holland's evolution from a cinematographic vision focused on Polish problems and historical circumstances, such as the death of the opposition priest Jerzy Popiełuszko in *To Kill a Priest* (1988), to lighter, more universal topics exploited in the international circulation under the auspices of Warner Bros may be seen as a conquest of a new space of freedom. It contrasts with her earlier concept of film-making as a form of political engagement, an opposition activity, since any cinematographic narration consisted essentially in showing "the crisis of the regime by showing the stagnating lives of small people" (Iordanova 2003: 108). In the realisation of her new artistic project, the Polish director counted with the collaboration of the best: the film's executive producer was Francis Ford Coppola. Holland successfully worked

with an international team, yet quite importantly, she also exploited the excellence available in her country of origin: the soundtrack was created by the leading Polish composer Zbigniew Preisner, winning "Best Music" at the 1993 Los Angeles Film Critics Association Awards. No wonder that Holland's *The Secret Garden* persistently focused considerable critical attention and has been thoroughly studied (Stephen and McCallum 1996; Davies 2001; Wells 2009; Birk 2012; Klonowska 2014, and other).

The choice of returning to Holland's *The Secret Garden* thirty years later may be justified by the evolution of the cultural flux in which the individual work is immersed. The state of culture may soften the resonance of a work of art or close the polemics around it or, on the contrary, make them more strident. The value of a film as a cultural manifesto may become obsolete or redundant with time or, on the contrary, appear more resounding. In 1993, *The Secret Garden* was a dream conceived by an East-European creator shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall, an emotional avowal of Europeanness, a vote in favour of Western civilisation. The choice of the English children's classic as a canvas for a film was a deliberate act of establishing a creative connection with it at the source, in the universe of infancy, ingenuity, and purity, against the sore awareness of childhoods missed in the oppressive and grey reality of the Eastern Bloc. This initial enthusiasm has waxed and waned along the recent decades. The current cultural awareness of the Poles is haunted by a profound distrust in relation to Western values, standards, and ways of life. In her recent work, Holland is stridently critical of this new cultural turn. Her latest film, *The Green Border* (2023), thematising the tragedy of the migrants pushed back on the border between Poland and Belarus, provoked a violent controversy due to Holland's uncompromising criticism of what she sees as a betrayal of the civilised standards and the hypocrisy of Polish society, that proudly defines itself as the *antemurale* of Christianity while committing atrocities against defenceless migrants.

The vote of Poland's belonging to Europe, celebrated thirty years ago by the beautiful interpretation of Burnett's narration, has been placed under an interrogation mark. Today's right-wing manipulative messages often resemble the old communist propaganda, that strived to create a negative image of the West as a world that enjoyed material abundance, yet lacked morality, core values, and thus appeared as rotten from within. The phrase "rotten West" (*zgniły Zachód*) became a fixed idiomatic expression in Polish along the post-war decades. On the other hand, the present-day right-wing propaganda exploits the discourse created by the Catholic Church, speaking of the "culture (or civilisation) of death". The notion of "civilisation of death", introduced by Pope John Paul II, among other instances in the encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, is supposed to resume a nihilistic way of life, based on individualism and hedonism, the search for individual fulfilment rather than sacrifice, conjugated with sinful attempts at controlling life through medical means. This general attitude involves both contraception and conception *in vitro* (epitomising human hubris), as well as vindication of such rights as abortion and euthanasia. Also, the criticism resumed under the label of "civilisation of death" is often directed against "false" democracy, arguably based on moral relativism and nefarious secularisation. Such an attitude is treated as contradictory with the respect of God-given, supra-human vitality. The Western societies living according to the principles of human hubris are presented as sterile and stagnant.

The persistence of those notions in Polish culture makes Holland's artistic challenge extremely important. Although *The Secret Garden* created a global impact, its message failed to prove sufficiently transformative in Eastern Europe. This is why it is crucial to reflect upon the legacy of *The Secret Garden* thirty years later. The manipulative notion of "the rotten West" lives

on, menacing to erode the cultural unity of Europe, while the initial enthusiasm for European values has vanished. As it will be shown in the analysis that follows, the ideological use of the categories of "life" and "death" creates a slippery ground that requires critical intervention. The defence of Life (understood as an abstract, God-given, supra-human value) against the presumed "culture of death" may foster a fundamental disrespect for individual human life without a capital letter (the presumed insignificance of a profane, worldly phenomenon). It may also justify lack of concern with human suffering, confronted with the exaltation of the transformative value of sacrifice. Inversely, the attitude based on hubris may foster an attitude of responsibility and care, as well as a profound trust in the transformative value of human work, creating the conditions for an authentic vitality, as celebrated in Holland's *The Secret Garden*.

Over Mothers' Dead Bodies

As a universal classic, Frances Hodgson Burnett's novel deals, so to speak, with a mourning dysfunction. Mary Lennox, a self-centred, lonely 10-year-old child, proves unable to miss her mother after her death. She is unable to step into the process of mourning, while her uncle, Archibald Craven, equally self-centred in his sorrow, is unable to let go of his grief. He is unable to complete the mourning cycle after the death of his wife in childbirth. The twin sisters (the mother of Mary and Lilias Craven, the mother of Colin) that form the central couple of women in the story are characterised primarily by their absence, either real, caused by the death of the heavily pregnant, or affective, as her sister abdicates from her motherhood and distances herself from her child, even before the cholera epidemic (in the novel) or the earthquake (in the film) makes her absence factual. Also Lord Craven answers to the miscarriage trauma by radical isolation: he refuses to see anyone, most of all the newborn baby. Just like Mary's mother, he built up an affective distance in relation to his son, because he feared that his death, that seemed imminent as the newly born baby was very weak, might kick him altogether out of his mental balance. In parallel, he responded to the threat lurking over the fragile infant by over-medication. Since his earliest childhood, Colin is put in the care of doctors and nurses, made object of numerous and varied therapies.

From East-European perspective, the health risks and possible lethal consequences of pregnancy and delivery are a taboo subject. In English literature, they gained relatively greater visibility. The dangers of pregnancy and childbirth, translated into both female and male traumas related to the delivery, were thematised in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. Frances Hodgson Burnett built up a clear intertextual reference situating the isolated Misselthwaite Manor in the ominous landscape of the moors. Taking up the literary material of Burnett's *The Secret Garden* as a canvas for her cinematographic work, Agnieszka Holland could thus fill a void in her native culture, creating a symbolic representation of endangered pregnancy that was culturally hushed in Eastern Europe. Instead of admitting an open discussion of pregnancy and childbirth, Polish culture developed and exploited the notion of maternal sacrifice as an unconditional duty. A pregnant woman falls into the summary, yet culturally significant category of "the Mother Pole". Her status is sacralised in an ambivalent and perverse way: she becomes a designated sacrificial victim. She is stripped of her individual rights on the altar of her child's or children's greater good. This cultural call for sacrifice denies not only the woman's right to decide about her own life, but even to grant her biological survival. A mother's duty, if such is her fate, is to die.

Western tendency to over-medication of pregnancy, childbirth and early childhood has no place in the East. Since the time Agnieszka Holland created her version of *The Secret Garden*, strands of activism and social campaigns, such as "Rodzić po ludzku" ("To give birth like a human"), under the auspices of the influential newspaper "Gazeta Wyborcza", could have contributed to significant change of Polish reality. Nonetheless, contemporary Poland stands sharply against the European background as the country in which termination of pregnancy is bluntly forbidden or denied, even if the life of the mother is endangered. Other medical procedures belonging to the obvious European standard in obstetric healthcare are also severely restricted or unavailable. As I write these words, a vast majority of Polish women still give birth without the benefit of pain medication throughout labour. In case of pregnancy complications, life-saving medical procedures are postponed, resulting in deaths that contemporary medicine might have easily spared. The names of publicly identified victims, such as Izabela from Pszczyna or Dorota from Nowy Targ, are the cause of a considerable outcry, yet the protests risen by their deaths proved not strong enough to provoke a change in legislation or an improvement of healthcare standards. Quite on the contrary, in 2023, the newly appointed Polish minister of health Katarzyna Sójka stated impassibly that "women always died, are dying and will die"[1].

The ataraxic wisdom of the Polish health minister was unavailable to the mourning Archibald Craven. Treating his wife's death as an event beyond any consolation, putting the reminder of his hope in medicine rather than faith, and even more importantly, adopting his individualistic, self-centred fixation on grief, Lord Craven might be seen as a perfect representative of the "civilisation of death" and a typical "rotten" Westerner. Yet, building her cinematographic narration, Holland moved away from the taboos and prejudices of her native culture with great subtlety and sensibility. Instead of condemning Craven for his excessive attitude or presenting the death of his wife as a natural and, in a way, normal event, she created an image of ambivalence framing a heavily pregnant woman in a blossoming garden. Exploring the secrets of the gloomy mansion, the children discover photographs made by Craven shortly before his wife's death. They show her radiant and laughing on a swing, surrounded with the beauty of her rose garden. The movement of the swing conjugates the reckless joy and the fragility of her physiological condition. This image is an important innovation added to Burnett's story, where Mrs Craven simply sat in the garden to read and got injured because a branch unexpectedly broke. The accident led to premature labour and her death during the delivery of her son Colin. Rather than proposing a euphemism or silencing this aspect in her version of the story, Holland exploited the symbol of a swing to express the ambivalence of vitality and looming menace inscribed in the figure of a pregnant woman. Creating a compelling metaphorical representation of pregnancy as a risk, Holland filled a blank space in her native, as well as universal culture. She increased the visibility not only of pregnancy as a part of womanhood, but also of an uncomfortable truth that the society would gladly put out of sight: that the birth of a new life may enter in contradiction with the survival of the mother.

[1] "Śmierć ciężarnej 33-latki. Posłanka PiS: kobiety umierały, umierają i będą umierać" [Death of the pregnant 33-year-old. The deputy of "Law and Justice" Party: women died, are dying and will die] https://www.polsatnews.pl/wideo/smierc-ciezarnej-33-latki-poslanka-pis-kobiety-umieraly-umieraja-i-beda-umierac_6823185/ [Accessed: 24.08.2023].

Music to Say Things That Are Hard to Explain

Having in view a compelling, artistically mature expression of the East-European vote of faith and belonging to the Western civilisation in order to counter the notion of Western "rottenness" pervading her native culture, Agnieszka Holland counted with the contribution of an eminent Polish creator, Zbigniew Preisner. Two years earlier, in 1991, he created music for Krzysztof Kieślowski's *The Double Life of Veronique*, another major example in the filmography speaking of the East-West divide in Europe. Kieślowski made use of the motif of the Doppelganger, providing an East-European opera singer with a double, an identical young woman living on the opposite side of the Iron Curtain. The result is a blatant disparity of destinies produced by divergent attitudes toward life. Both women were predestined to die young due to an inborn defect leading to heart failure. Weronika, a Pole, tragically dies on stage, in the most sublime moment of the performance. Meanwhile, the anomaly of her Western double had been corrected by a surgical intervention shortly after her birth, so she did not develop any further health problems. The Western hubris, as a belief in human transformative powers, anticipates the dangers and fosters future-oriented actions, such as preventive medical intervention performed on a baby to exclude the development of a life-threatening condition. What is more, as the heart of the French Veronique was cured soon after her birth, the young woman is free to seek the delights of earthly love and individualistic fulfilment instead of the sublime death of her East-European counterpart. What is equally significant, the operatic music created by Preisner for *The Double Life of Veronique* is attributed to a fictitious 18th-century Dutch composer Van den Budenmayer. The music of this imaginary composer appears in other Kieślowski's movies, most importantly in the *Three Colours* cycle ("Blue"), where Weronika's performance is quoted in the E-minor soprano "Song for the Unification of Europe".

In Holland's film, the vision of the Western rose garden in full blossom lacks such a conspicuous, symmetrical opposition or East-European counterpart (although Burnett's motive of twin sisters comes close to the double existence of Veronique). What is more, the analysis of music as a vehicle of ideological options is a particularly tricky analytical task. Nonetheless, it seems justifiable as a working hypothesis to interpret Preisner's soundtrack of *The Secret Garden* as yet another, simple, sincere, and naïve song of love for Europe designed to bridge the East-West divide. The Kantian notion of the sublime, exemplified in the music attributed to the fictitious composer in Kieślowski's film, is useful also for the understanding of the role played by Preisner's work in *The Secret Garden*. As I dare to argue, the multimodal cinematographic narration of the English story strives to present the sublime of the European project of transformation of the world. Europe becomes a garden of an almost insupportable beauty, at the point of breaking the viewer's heart, just as it happened to Weronika performing the newly discovered aria. The simple, almost naive flute leitmotiv employed by Preisner in *The Secret Garden* is yet another sublime chant of fidelity to Western civilisation that stands the comparison with the operatic aria composed for *The Double Life of Veronique*. Preisner's musical composition accompanying the images of spring, the rebirth of vegetable life and blossoming of the garden is a hymn to vitality, harmony and never-ending productivity of the European soil.

Other ideological notions may as well be associated with melodic themes in Preisner's soundtrack. One of its highlights is the folk song performed in the kitchen by one of the servants. Full of disquieting, powerful longing and energy, the melody composed by Preisner may be interpreted as a hymn celebrating human work. In *The Secret Garden*, labour (in the

double sense of child delivery and transformational action) appears as the central Western value contrasting with the sacrifice (involved in a parallel quest for the sublime), celebrated in Polish culture. If we consider the complexity of Preisner's artistic work, also the presumed folk song composed for *The Secret Garden* may be treated as a counterpart of the aria of Weronika. The vitality and power of the simple song sung in the kitchen counterbalances and complements the death drive epitomised in the aria performed on the stage of the philharmonic house in Kraków.

The Earth and Labour

In many ways, Agnieszka Holland builds up upon the literary canvas, enriching the original message provided by Burnett with her peculiar, East-European contribution. But could the legacy of terror be seen as a positive one? Born in Stalinist times, burdened with the memory of her grandparents who perished in the Holocaust as well as her father's unexplained death (possibly during a violent interrogation at a police station), Agnieszka Holland overrides Burnett's story with her cataclysmic sensibility. It is visible right at the beginning of her film, as Mary Lennox loses her parents in an earthquake. The catastrophe is observed by the child from her Holocaust-like hiding place under the bed. In the original story, the catastrophic event was euphemised: Mary, unattended by her Ayah, drank a glass of sweet wine left on the table in an abandoned dining-room and slept soundly all the remaining time of the cholera outbreak. Life draining out of the familiar world of her first childhood was symbolised by a little snake "gliding along and watching her with eyes like jewels" (Burnett, 1911: 7). Finally, it slipped under the door making a rustling noise rather than a roar.

Similar expectation of a catastrophe and the preference given to the strident, unmitigated expression of trauma may be seen in the scene of the conversation between Lord Craven and Mary who asks for "a bit of earth". In Burnett's book, the moment is described as full of kindness, justified by the physical resemblance between Mary and Craven's dead wife: "'You remind me of someone else who loved the earth and things that grow. When you see a bit of earth you want,' with something like a smile, 'take it, child, and make it come alive'" (104). Meanwhile, in Holland's interpretation, the unmitigated self-absorption of Craven in his grief comes to the fore. As John Stephens and Robyn McCallum conclude, "Holland's reformulation as a counsel of despair from a fragile and distraught man now emotionally runs past the usual more sentimental connection between Mary and Lilias to an apprehension that Mary's desire will only result in a desolation equivalent to Craven's own experience" (1994: 360-361).

The peculiarity of Holland's interpretation of the English novel may thus be resumed as a vision of a creative subject bringing her background of oppression and cataclysmic expectation into a universe characterised by greater stability and harmony. Holland comes from a country lacking such values as dignity, respect, democracy and strives to compensate her sore situation, accentuating the presence of those missing elements in her cinematographic narration. The premises of democracy in the recognition of a common human stance of the society's superiors and subalterns were glossed over rather elliptically in the original Burnett's text at the moment of the first encounter of Mary Lennox and her new maid Martha. Certainly, in English metropolitan society, in spite of the absence of colonial subalternity, class distinctions remained very profound. Yet the relations between the members of social strata are based on the notion of general human dignity and therefore tainted with respect. The rules and boundaries are binding for the social superiors just as for the subalterns. Martha stands apart from the Indian

ayahs who took care of Mary in her previous life: "The native servants she had been used to in India were not in the least like this. They were obsequious and servile and did not presume to talk to their masters as if they were their equals" (Burnett, 1911: 31-32). Mary experiences, for the first time in her life, the resistance of the will of those who she may see as her social inferiors. The same applies to the gardener Ben Weatherstaff who may well refuse to answer her questions. On the other hand, he does not hesitate to shorten the social distance, establishing a comparison, not quite a flattering one, between himself and the little miss: "We was wove out of th' same cloth. We're neither of us good lookin' an' we're both of us as sour as we look. We've got the same nasty tempers, both of us, I'll warrant." (51). What comes to the fore in Holland's version is the wonder and awe in confrontation with independent agency. Burnett contrasted the usages and attitudes characteristic for England with the colonial submissiveness of Indian servants. In the symbolic idiom of the film, as it may be argued, they stand apart from the denied freedom and dignity under the East-European authoritarian regimes. The wonderful independence is thus to be admired in social subalterns and even in non-human beings. It is epitomised in the self-reflective temperament of Martha (who reacts to Mary's remark about her being a strange servant by musing on her own peculiarity) as well as the independence of wild animals: the robin, playing a crucial role as the guide indicating the way to the closed garden, is characterised as a being that does not admit nor obey orders.

Although nominally she belongs to the upper social stratum, Mary lives in a state of sore abjection. "I have nothing to play with", she confesses, and her first cherished possession (the skipping rope) happens to be a present of those socially below her. What is more, it is through their intermediary that the young Miss Lennox acquires the tools enabling her to cultivate the garden, taking on the legacy maintained alive by the old gardener Ben over the span of the ten years after the death of Colin's mother. The gardener is thus the true provider of this legacy, even if the land nominally belongs to Lord Craven. The uncle accepts to bestow the girl with the earth she asks for, yet contrary to Ben, he remains alienated from the vitality of the garden, because he declares himself unconvinced about any positive outcome of Mary's endeavour.

Holland's vision of the garden privileges the rose as a deeply "cultured" vegetable element, a plant that requires more human care than other species. The labour for the roses' sake may be assumed by anyone, with no restriction of social class, age or gender. It unites the young Miss Lennox with Ben across the generational gap and with Dickon, her servant's brother, across the difference of social class. What is more, the rose garden epitomises the challenge of organising and curating the world and its "growin' things". Bringing the garden back to life, as it has been suggested, prioritises the transformative value of human work over sacrifice. The profane, earthly, light-coloured blossoms that Mary cultivates stand apart from a possible Catholic resonance of the red rose as a symbol of martyrdom (that incidentally are a leitmotiv in Holland's cinematographic work, reappearing in *The Green Border*, where the migrants predestined to dehumanisation and death receive red roses). Agnieszka Holland incessantly repeats and reformulates her warning that the culture that valorises roses of martyrdom can easily precipitate into the acceptance and "normalcy" of the viewpoint that women – or migrants, or some other category of lesser beings – must perish, be exposed to the danger of death, or at least suffer unmitigated pain. On the other hand, the symbolic language developed in *The Secret Garden* depicts labour that does not need to come close to death, torture or humiliation to acquire transformative and enlivening value.

The Feminine Uncorrupted

Already in an early review of Holland's film, Gloria Avrech identified its central theme as "the absence or abuse of the Feminine" (1994: 151). What is more, in diverse interpretations of *The Secret Garden*, the double motherhood of the twin sisters was often seen as a device permitting to contrast "good" and "evil" women. While the "good" sister sacrifices herself in motherhood, the "evil" one dedicates her time to the sinful, typically feminine pursuit of vanity and mundane pleasures:

> The operative female schema emerges clearly in comparison with the Holland film, in which Mary and Colin's mothers are twinned in order to split the mother-imago into good and bad (especially in terms of the mother who gives [Lilias] and the mother who withholds), and this is further reflected in present actuality in Medlock and Martha (Medlock commands, drags Mary around, locks her up and would send her away; Martha, still part girl herself, touches, tickles, and encourages conversation, play and affection). (Stephens; McCallum, 1994: 362)

Yet the distribution of roles in Holland's film may also be interpreted differently. Mary's mother may rather be paired with Lord Craven as an image of double refusal of assuming the parental function, caused by trauma and the fear of further emotional breakdown. Craven, who may be seen as a "culprit" of his wife's death (as he was of course instrumental in making her pregnant), for ten years refused to assume the paternal affects. Also for Mary's mother, the rejection of affective acceptance of motherhood might have a lot to do with her twin sister's miscarriage and death.

As the cinematographic narration develops, the affective connection is restored not only between Colin and his father, but also between Mary and her deceased mother, namely in the sequence illustrating a dream or a recollection from Mary's earliest childhood. The disquieting scene showing a very young child among the giant leaves of gunnera, a kind of giant rhubarb common in English botanical gardens, marks the presence of a happier memory pushed down into the unconsciousness. The dream permits to re-establish the connection with a happy past, in which Mary's mother was still alive and emotionally available. The traumatic memory of maternal insensibility and distance is exorcised by the symbolic image of the gunnera plant. Its succulent young leaves, before their full expansion, are tightly wrapped in the centre of the plant and may serve as a symbolic image of uterine protection and maternal intimacy. The dream staging the gunnera plants marks the reconciliation between the girl and the memory of her mother. What is more, it is curious to observe that a dream also plays a crucial role in assuming paternity. Fallen asleep in a hotel armchair during one of his interminable travels away from home, Lord Craven is suddenly awaken by a particularly vivid dream. In the logic of the cinematographic story, this dream is the result of a magical ritual invented by Mary and Colin. Be that as it may, he decides to return home and engage in the relationship with his rejected son.

As Maire Messenger Davies (2001) has shown, both Burnett's novel and Holland's film contain numerous hints of sexuality and sexual-emotional content present in the experience of preadolescent children. The initial sequence of the film, showing Mary Lennox being dressed by her Indian servants, might be susceptible to interpretation in terms of possible "sub-pornographic" codes. Even if Mary and her cousin Colin sleep in the same bed (a detail that is absent in the original novel), Holland's recognition of the presence of preadolescent sexuality is

encoded primarily in the language of natural imagery, exploiting the notion of paradise-like innocence rather than that of corruption. In the metaphorical progression of the cinematographic narration, "sub-pornographic" acts of being dressed in India are abandoned in favour of "decent" acts of dressing by herself in England, just as the bed as a space of encounter and the shared secret of the children is abandoned in favour of the garden. The act of denuding Colin's body does not belong to a scenario of sexual-intellectual epistemophilia, or the Freudian *Wisstrieb*. Even if the scene is interrupted violently by the caretaker as if the children were caught up doing something dirty, the act of touching Colin's body befits rather a logic of inspection. Mary examines his cousin's back only to declare authoritatively that he is not a hunchback, he did not inherit his father's condition. As a result of this rough inspection and the authoritative verdict pronounced by Mary, Colin discovers that he is not going to die, as it was feared. His first act on the side of life is his decision to go out and find his mother's garden. The possibility of corruption is evaded, and preadolescent energies are channelled in the care of the vegetable kingdom.

This evasion of Eros, or its suspension, exorcises, at least for the time being, also Thanatos. The garden of innocent delights may become an unspoiled paradise. Even Lord Craven, having finally closed the cycle of his grief, may be reintroduced into its walled perimeter. The scene of the inspection of Colin's back by Mary is almost literally repeated at the moment of the mutual recognition of father and son. Lord Craven, who did not yet see his son standing upright and able to walk, surprises him while playing the game of blind man's buff with Mary and Dickon. Allowing his son's hands to palp his face, Lord Craven lets himself be known and symbolically assumes his paternity. Stretching his hands to explore by palpation his father's face, Colin is revisiting his first infancy rather than anticipating his sexual adulthood.

The hypothesis of quasi-erotic relation between the cousins might eventually help to explain two crisis episodes in the film. The first one takes place when Colin sees Mary ride away with Colin on the back of his pony. In a tantrum of jealousy, he falls on the floor and starts shouting hysterically. As a result, Mary, in spite of her young age, assumes the authority, shouting Colin back to his reason. Similarly, Colin also breaks through the boundaries of his infantile condition, speaking as the master of the house in the absence of his father (who still travels away from home, refusing to accept his paternity). In the overall interpretation of the scene of Colin's tantrum, the accent may thus be moved away from erotic jealousy to the necessity of establishing a subtle balance of power between the protagonists. The second episode of crisis takes place at the moment of the aforementioned recognition of father and son. Mary suddenly feels alien to this newly formed couple and exclaims in utter disarray: "No one wants me!" Arguably, this scene may be interpreted as a moment of establishing a new balance of proximity and status, a moment in which the place occupied by each of the protagonists is shifting. A new balance of power and energy is found almost immediately as Lord Craven recognizes Mary's contribution in bringing them "back to life" and acknowledges her right to occupy a place in the family framework. The three of them stroll energetically through the meadow under the glance of the household servants who look at them through the window.

Female energy, recovered as soon as Mary finds the key to the hidden door of the garden in her aunt's bureau, reconfigures a larger framework of relations between the protagonists, including a new, healthier formula of relations between household's supervisor, Mrs. Medlock, and her young servant, who, as a gesture of consolation and solidarity, stretches her hand

around the older woman's back. What is more, it is through this recovery of feminine power that also wounded masculinity (both in Lord Craven and Colin) may be healed.

The vision of femininity as an uncorrupted element counters the depreciation of women that is certainly a common European problem, yet that remains particularly blatant in contemporary Eastern Europe, where women proved to be the losers of the political transformation. In determined spheres of life, such as reproductive rights, they suffer nowadays greater oppression than throughout the communist period. What is more, their vindications are often dismissed as the woman is placed on the side of the "civilisation of death". This is why Holland's vision of femininity as sound and uncorrupted is still such an important legacy thirty years later.

Conclusion

In an interview conceded to John C. Tibbetts, Agnieszka Holland speaks about her memories related to Burnett's children's classic:

> "I grew up with that book," she explains. "I was reading all the time and that was one of my favourite stories. And when I had the chance to make it into a movie, I knew that for a change I could tell a simple story and concentrate on the depth of Mary's change from petty, spoiled child to a loving, life-inspiring creature. However, you can find places in it where I was forced to add some details to brighten things up – more shots of flowers and animals running around and that sort of thing. I hated that." (2008: 139)

Western books, such as Astrid Lindgren's *The Bullerby Children* or A.A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh,* shaped Polish childhoods, providing the post-war generation of Poles, educated behind the Iron Curtain, with a vision of a world more harmonious and happier than their own. At the same time, reading them was flawed by a persistent feel of estrangement, as they evoked not only the ideal worlds, but also, to a large degree, an axiology of care, respect, harmony, and order that laid out of our boundaries, both politically and mentally. It was, in a way, too much sweetness to bear. Perhaps it explains the director's reluctance in exploring artistically such images as flowers and happy animals. She was used to a darker, gloomier aesthetics. Unfortunately, the return of the gloom was to happen almost two decades after Poland's integration in the prosperous world of Western civilisation. In *The Green Border*, contrary to the last sequence of the film analysed here, the whole world ceases to be a garden, revealing deep fissures of the vital, resilient, uncorrupted humanness that seemed to triumph in the adaptation of Burnett's novel.

The recovery of the garden is a symbol of reconciliation performed by a next generation. The space marked with loss and seclusion after the death of the pregnant woman is reconquered as a paradise of healing, growth and maturation. The children's literature providing individual lives with a mental foundation of order, harmony, and stability, the gardening craze – those elements of the English culture may not appear as central in the nationalistic hierarchy of importance. Nonetheless, those margins of Englishness are treated as the most inspiring by the East-European creator. Just as Yorkshire with its landscape of moors stands for England, England stands for the essence of the West, resuming, as a *pars pro toto*, the civilised life. An East-European subject immersed in the post-war alienating history may eventually identify with Mary Lennox's return from India and her discovery of a different life: a life based on the trust in transformative efficacy of human work and the respect for human

dignity epitomized by humble people, an element which was often missing in the East paying merely lip service to the egalitarian values of communism. Holland chooses to present the West as a space of resilience, deconstructing the idioms of corruption that might eventually be found also in the original text she took as her starting point. In her cinematographic idiom, she euphemizes even the moor, the very essence of the haunting landscape of English literature, the synecdoche of a barren world, transforming it into a visual sign of open horizons connoting liberation and transformative perspectives of the "growin' things".

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Sullivan's Travels (1941): The American *Gulliver* or Deconstructing the American Dream

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In my paper, I will focus on the director Preston Sturges' intervention in the Depression-era comedy, rooted in the satirical format of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), in an attempt to highlight the ways in which his revolutionary approach to narrative and character undermined the coherence of representations of the American Dream. Preston introduced non-linearity and Naturalistic and Absurdist elements in typical comedy formats (like the screwball comedy), thus challenging the veracity of American Dream narratives. *Sullivan's Travels* (1941), in which socially conscious endeavors only prolong social misery and unrest, postpones narrative resolution to the point of becoming the ultimate deconstruction of the American Dream. Moreover, Preston Sturges' movies play with narrative in such a way as to unravel the constructedness of the American Dream. By choosing to foreground moral ambivalence over clear-cut categorizations, his films delight in the characters' misadventures without passing moral judgment. Rooted in genuine feeling rather than prescribed reactions, Sturges' movies lend a paradoxically empathetic skepticism to the interpretation of the American Dream, privileging humanity over stereotype.

I. Depression-Era Comedy and the American Dream

The 1930s are deemed a revolutionary period in American cinema not only due to the advent of sound, but also in light of the "invention" and consolidation of a new film genre – the screwball comedy, a form of romantic comedy revolving around the well-known trope of the battle of the sexes, deeply rooted in the new possibilities of spoken language and dialogue. As movies transitioned to sound, their focus was recast on dialogue and its comic and satirical potential; conflictual relationships between characters from different socio-cultural backgrounds came to the fore, and their socio-linguistic differences were exploited for the sake of both entertainment and social critique (Beach, 2002: 1). Silent-era depictions of social class had also succeeded in creating long-lasting representations of working-class individuals, but visual icons like Charlie Chaplin's "Tramp" have entered collective mentality as romanticized depictions of the tragic poetry of poverty. As a result, "the Tramp" has become a "character type" devoid of the problematization of social issues which prompted its creation (2). If such caricature-like representations eluded geographical and socio-cultural categorizations, the introduction of sound enabled the complementarity between nonverbal elements (gestures, posture, facial expressions, dress), verbal components (grammar, vocabulary, accent), and paraverbal signifiers (pitch, rhythm, diction,

stress) (2). As a result, articulations of class by means of character and dialogue became more nuanced and allowed filmmakers to render the relationship between individual and community, on the one hand, and individual and American social order and mentalities, on the other.

Hollywood sound cinema also marked the emergence of the double role of film – both entertainment and critique of social mores. The "comedy film" was thus conceived as a form of comic relief from the dire reality of the Depression, but also as a critique of American capitalist institutions and capital-bound interactions (Sklar, 1994: 175). Ironically, the middle class became the foremost viewership during this period, so American cinema was also confronted with the challenge of offering "respectable" entertainment (Beach, 2002: 7). This is how a new comic format was born: the screwball comedy, where gender and class conflicts resulted in potentially dangerous misadventures which threatened the ethos of the American Dream only to reinforce it (Sands, s.p.). Highlighting the need for struggle in the name of the American Dream and relying on American myths (such as "the American Adam" and "the pastoral utopia") to create larger-than-life characters, comedy film derived its humor from gender and class incongruities, but aimed to prove that American virtues could transform social tensions into gender and class harmony. Nonetheless, idealized narratives and characters were counterbalanced by the Depression-specific worry for excess, which prevented the complete espousal of the American Dream tenets. Consequently, nuanced dialogue and social observation gave way to an interrogation of American myths and ideals: film-makers cast a doubtful eye on recurrent cross-class romance and questioned the validity of excessive masculinity and/or capitalism to the fulfilment of the American Dream.

Thus, Depression-era comedies both illustrated and shaped socially acceptable American behaviors, contributing to the cultural "homogenization" of the diverse American society (Beach, 2002: 7-8). Consolidated in the 1930s as a means of preserving the democratic promise of socio-economic success and integration, the American Dream became a major force in the process of (re)fashioning American identities. With the aid of cultural, feminist, and Marxist theories, I will conduct a close viewing of *Sullivan's Travels* (1941) that should reveal the film's rearticulation and interrogation of the American Dream. I will, therefore, take into consideration the formula of the American Dream as delineated by the main American myths.

The myth of America as the Promised Land is strongly linked to how early American studies scholars envisioned America – the Pilgrims of Plymouth and the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay Colony as the founding fathers and New England as the "cradle of American civilization" (Paul, 2014: 138). This vision of America stemmed from the idealization which imprinted the Pilgrims' and Puritans' religious and social discourse: they were mostly Calvinist refugees who saw themselves as the "chosen people," elected by God for the reenactment of the Kingdom of God on Earth. They believed that their journey across the Atlantic mirrored the Biblical journey into the Promised Land; likewise, their experience in the New World was meant to restore the prelapsarian order.

This image of America as an Edenic utopia has its roots in the Renaissance rhetoric of the first British explorers to the New World. The discourse of 17th and 18th-century Puritan theology transformed the cult of the "elect" who entered a "covenant with God" into the grand narrative of American exceptionalism. Amplified in times of historical turmoil such as the American Revolution and the Civil War, the myth of the Promised Land paved the way for the rhetoric of Manifest Destiny and the imperialistic expansionism of the Frontier (Paul, 2014: 176). In the 20th century, works like Perry Miller's *Errand into Wilderness* (1952) further placed the quest for the Promised Land and the self-created utopia at the heart of American culture

and history, thus leading to the acknowledgement of the Promised Land as "the myth that made American studies" (Paul, 2014: 19, 140). This vision of America as the Promised Land, on the other hand, has been contested ever since the Civil Rights and Feminist movements outlined its white male supremacist overtones (140).

The myth of the self-engendering American hero is inseparable from the myth of the Garden of Eden. America as the second, or regained Paradise embodies the American continent as an agrarian utopia, where the innocent, evil-free American Adam, unshackled by heredity or history, can start humankind anew. The first explorers of the age of "discovery and exploration" projected their Renaissance ideals of a perfectible land and nation on the New World, thus lending Biblical and pastoral dimensions to the new continent. In the field of American studies, Myth and Symbol School founder Henry Nash Smith argued that the American Garden was peculiar in that it was linear and progressive, as opposed to the circular and static Eden: the American Paradise was best represented by the ever-moving, permeable Frontier, constantly regenerating itself through the incorporation of new territory (Smith 254).

Leo Marx's *The Machine in the Garden* (1964) depicts the American Garden as a site that makes possible the reconciliation of chaos and order, wilderness and civilization. As an illustration of the tensions between the pastoral and the technological, the Garden and its open Frontier appease the intrusive effects of technology and industrialization upon the chaste, eternally young American psyche (Marx, 2000: 26). It can be said that for both Smith and Marx, the Garden embodies the American ideal of peaceful self-sufficiency and communion with nature, but this vision was not free of its problematic ambiguities. In the 1980s, Richard Slotkin theorized the clash between Adamic absolute freedom and American egalitarian values, showing that the ever-expanding Garden encroached upon the land and freedom of other populations, such as the Native Americans. The myth of the Garden was further challenged by the New Americanists, who tried to debunk the image of a paradisiacal America by building on Slotkin's idea of "regeneration through violence" (Slotkin, 1998: 51).

Frederick Jackson Turner's *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* (1893) propounded the Frontier as a foundational myth and the West as a foundational topos for American culture and civilization. According to Turner, the experience of the Frontier had had a major role in shaping American democracy and political and social institutions, but also on the typically American features of the American Adam: egalitarianism, self-reliance, and resourcefulness (Turner qtd. in Paul, 2014: 311). The Frontier thesis emerged during the post-Civil War Reconstruction Era, a time where America had re-become whole and was striving to reassert itself as an international power (Paul, 2014: 313). The Frontier thesis allowed America to break away with its European heritage and reconfigure its culture and geography along an East/West border (311).

The West as a mythical space epitomized by the Frontier rendered the exceptionalism of the American Adam in his formative and creative first-hand incursions through the New World. The Myth and Symbol scholars further consolidated the Frontier myth into a national narrative (Paul, 2014: 312). The West thus became the new Garden of Eden, a space where conquest underpinned a forward-looking approach to American history and progress (314-315). The West also spoke to the American preoccupation with an idyllic, pastoral version of the New World, which preserved the genuinely American agrarian way of life against the threat of exaggerated industrialization (312). More than anything, the West and the Frontier myths forever ingrained the land in the American psyche as a crucial element of Americanness (311). The West and the Frontier are conflicting dimensions of American culture, because the

peaceful, agrarian utopia of Western farmers seems to be at odds with the expansionism of the Frontier, never fixed, always moving westward so as to conquer more and more territory (314). However, both visions stem from the exceptionalism of the American Adam character and his civilizing powers over nature and land.

The myth of the American Adam has been associated with the American cult for a rural, agrarian past and the cultural depictions of America as a pastoral garden to be cultivated through the energy and ingenuity of a typically self-fashioned American male hero (Paul, 2014: 314). The self-reliance of the American hero, which was to become a cornerstone of both Transcendentalist and American philosophy, was anticipated by Thomas Jefferson in his account of America as a republic of exceptional, self-determined farmers, thus reiterating the myth of Adamic prowess in the American Garden (315). The Transcendentalist philosophy of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman infused the Adamic hero with "man-God" powers and reinforced the potential for self-creation of this second Adam (317).

Celebrating the endless potential of (American) human nature, Emerson and Whitman positioned the American Adam as both Creator and Creation – the Garden was thus constantly shaped and renewed by the Creator's will (Lewis, 1955: 23). All these features coalesced into Americanist scholar R. B. Lewis's theorization of the American Adam as an epitome for the original settlers and their active process of creation of the New World (27). According to Lewis, the Adamic hero predicated the creation of America on the premise of novelty and youthful energy (29). America is a micro-cosmos of pre-Fall Creation and the endless possibilities of this unblemished space. The American Adam has absolute power over both American land and history, as he is unencumbered by genealogy or history. It is this exceptional American individual, "standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling", who can give shape to what America and Americans become, by virtue of his godlike qualities (inner spirit and absolute freedom) (Lewis, 1955: 5). However, the image of the American Adam as a beacon of light for the American nation was contested as early as the mid-19th century, when the Dark Romantics started shedding light on the tension between America's democratic ideals and the underlying individualism and egotistical pursuits of the American Adam and the American Dream (Paul, 2014: 319).

Taking into consideration these introductory ideas that define American identity and its connection to innocence, freedom and the Frontier, I intend to uncover the interplay between American mythologies and cinematic form, with a view to illustrating how 1930s cinema both consolidated and reshaped American typologies of social, cultural, and economic success. The study of these films remains relevant to the contemporary viewer, in that they represent a form of American cultural production seeking to ask questions about American identity, while also negotiating the demands of both entertaining and educational aims.

II. *Sullivan's Travels* (1941): Gulliver's Satire and the Ultimate Deconstruction of American Dream Narratives

There is no better deconstruction of story-telling and narrative-based industries than *Sullivan's Travels* (1941), a work whose title alone suggests Sturges' ambivalent, elusive attitude towards story-tellers. Borrowing its name from a novel where the protagonist's perspective is constantly warped by the places he visits, *Sullivan's Travels* promises to both undermine and endorse the phantasmagorical nature of both movies and movie-makers. The main character, John L. Sullivan, comfortably resides at the very center of the movie industry, thanks to his brand of happy-go-lucky comedies, which he has been directing for a number of years to great

success. Young and hopeful, he wishes to displace this trend (which he had followed himself) by directing a documentary-like drama which realistically reflects the hardships of the working classes. Sullivan believes that movie-goers wish to see an expression of their struggle onscreen so as to render their experience, thus far sugar-coated by comedy, more visible. However, the studio head does not deem Sullivan's proposition a lucrative one, since they have received confirmations that the period they work in (the Great Depression) calls for an uplifting type of movies. Film scholars have consistently documented the fact that the comedy and melodrama trend was rarely challenged during the Depression, due to how profitable it was to present the public with entertainment that would offer them a form of katharsis (Sklar, 1994: 175). Nevertheless, Sturges does not pass judgment on either Sullivan or the studio head yet, because they are both depicted as working from a standpoint which requires, above all, the public's sympathetic reaction:

> Sullivan: I want this picture to be a commentary on modern conditions. Stark realism. The problems that confront the average man.
> Studio head: But with a little sex.
> Sullivan: A little, but I don't want to stress it (*Sullivan's Travels* 00:03:24 – 00:03:31).

Thus, from its very first scenes, the film tackles the opportunism of the movie industry by humorously presenting the process whereby studios take advantage of the disenfranchisement of the working class for their own profits. The narrative of the American Dream as equally promising and accessible to "the little man" is strongly undermined when the little man is pandered to by a person whose job is to actually fabricate these narratives. Furthermore, Sullivan's noble pursuit to speak to the common man is rendered pretentious and naïve by the preposterous nature of his project: he wishes to become a tramp so as to live through and understand the plight of such people first-hand, in other words, he is ready to become a disenfranchised person for a limited amount of time so as to perfect the quality of his artistic product. The fact that he regards poverty as a performative act which can be exploited for veracity is laughable enough, but the first few glimpses into Sullivan's lavish lifestyle quickly transform the character from a visionary director into a bitterly delusional, yet sweetly childish megalomaniac. Sullivan's well-spoken British butler also weighs in on the matter, by giving a highly cultured speech on the demeaning quality of a film that purports to present the reality of poverty as it truly is. Sturges' penchant for deconstruction reaches an apex in this scene, as this first sequence of the movie covers not only a trend and a "revolutionary" response to that trend, but also a critique of this supposedly "revolutionary" response: "If you'll permit me to say, sir, the subject is not an interesting one. The poor know all about poverty, and only the morbid rich would find the topic glamorous… [The poor] rather resent the invasion of their privacy" (*ST* 00:08:54 – 00:09:07).

Sturges' deconstruction of the American Adam is aided by his use of the picaresque mode. Initially, the main character dresses up and tries to perform the role of a typically low-class character in a picaresque narrative. The colorful cast accompanying the protagonist on his journey is also present, here in the shape of the studio staff comically stifling his artistic project. True to a picaresque story, the hero takes on a journey replete with humorous challenges, but if the usual stakes of a picaresque narrative are a socially coherent, fully respectable life at the end of the strenuous adventures, Sullivan's aim is a purely artistic one, and his travels are entirely fabricated. The American Garden turns from source of adventure, discovery, and challenging

experiences, into an anodyne navigation of self-imposed constraints. Unlike his inspiration, Gulliver, whose work as a seaman confronts him with a number of extraordinary situations, Sullivan deliberately rids himself of all means of comfort (his Hollywood staff included) and wishes to enjoy full freedom to explore hardship on his own terms. Just like Lewis' (and, later on, Slotkin's) American Adam, Sullivan is a hero who creates himself from determination and painstaking efforts, but Sullivan's pain is a fabricated one, which disenchants the viewer from idealistic renditions of the American Dream. The car chase, in which the protagonist rides in a race car driven by a child in an attempt to get away from his assistants, paints a ridiculous picture of the relationship between Hollywood personnel, ready to indulge the whims of movie directors, and the fanciful creators, who place their vision above the economic and social security of the people who work for their success (Wexman, 2015: 51). Unlike the potential adventures in the Garden, these ridiculous interactions do not result in progress, but in a circuitous return to origins – Hollywood – which forces Sullivan to cope with the idea of his own meaninglessness. In spite of all the clandestine freight trains he might board, Sullivan cannot help ending up in Hollywood time and time again. Even when he does manage to get away from Hollywood, he still finds himself in the vicinity of the movie industry.

Therefore, the first person Sullivan meets once he is finally free from Hollywood and roaming through Los Angeles is a young actress who has just left Hollywood and who, unlike him, could not find a job there. A practical counterpoint to Sullivan's populist flights of fancy, the girl (who remains unnamed for the rest of the movie) takes the director for a genuinely poor tramp and offers to buy him breakfast. Willing to return the favor, the protagonist befriends the girl and offers to take her to his Hollywood mansion after admitting that he is a well-known movie director. The repartee between Sullivan, who keeps citing his works, and the young actress, who is not impressed with his catalogue, complements the scathing commentary on the superficial value of celebrity and the irrelevance of Sullivan's journey of self-creation to the "ordinary" people Sullivan wants to represent. Once Sullivan became famous, he achieved the American Dream in its purest form – that is, fame lent him self-reliance and the possibility to explore and expand the Garden freely – but the girl does not care:

> Sullivan: [This car] belongs to a picture director… a guy named Sullivan.
> The girl: Oh.
> Sullivan: You never heard of him?
> The girl: No.
> Sullivan: He's made quite a few pictures. *Ants in Your Pants* of 1939 (…) [D]id you like it?
> The girl: Not much.
> Sullivan: Some people thought it was pretty good.
> The girl: I don't care for musicals. They hurt my ears" (*ST* 00:28:10 – 00:28:30).

If this were a classical screwball comedy, the couple would come across a number of roadblocks and conflicts that would eventually prove the strength of their connection, but *Sullivan's Travels* deromanticizes idealized versions of love promoted by 1940s cinema by rendering incident and interest the only two forces that keep Sullivan and the girl together (Beach, 2002: 96). Similarly, if picaresque shenanigans provide the protagonists with growth, the current couple's adventures are deliberately designed by themselves and only become dangerous and unpredictable when characters refuse to see their own limitations. However, their adventures start with a lull in action and a carefree discussion by Sullivan's swimming

pool, who is dissatisfied with the progress of his artistic project, while the girl laments the loss of his charm upon re-becoming a rich man: "You [made fun of me], with your stories of being a washed-up director, you big clunk (…) I liked you better as a tramp" (*ST* 00:33:21 – 00:34:03). Their problems are definitely not the problems of the impoverished people that Sullivan seeks to bring to light in his picture, but the girl is somehow motivated to continue the "common man" journey by the director's whimsical approach. Reversing the masculinity of the American Adam, she is resourceful enough to disguise as a boy and, as opposed to Sullivan's expectations, she turns out to have more stamina and ingenuity than the male protagonist.

On the road again, the director gets more acquainted with his experiment and manages to gain better insight into the harsh reality of indigent Americans. The film itself can no longer be accommodated by the comedic form and Sullivan and the girl lose any chance at comic relief as their adventures become a struggle for survival in the actual world of the destitute. As it was to be expected, Sullivan cuts the experiment when it is no longer convenient for him – ironically, when he feels there is no more left to be discovered about the world which he arduously tried to emulate (Wexman, 2015: 52). Ironically or not, in another nod to the fabrication of American "dreams", specifically, and stable meanings, in general, the couple's lunches in meal centers and nights in homeless shelters become the object of the film studio's publicity stunt for Sullivan's upcoming picture. Having made a successful team through so much toil and trouble, the girl wishes to remain with the director, but her desire for romantic fulfillment is outweighed by economic concerns. Someone who pleads for the relevance of art to the public, in favor of profit and success, should not regard wealth as such an important matter, but the irony lies precisely in Sullivan's careful preoccupation with money in his private life. Further using economic greed as a source of humor, the movie places the protagonist's research into the struggles of the poor next to his past attempts to cut down on his income taxes by getting married. When the married couple realized their joint taxes were even higher, Sullivan's wife entered a relationship with his business manager. The satirical tone here regards the money-making machine that is Hollywood as much as the individual thirst for profit, which drives some people to commit their life to anyone who has the least connection to money or money management, thus undermining the connection between "common men" and their aspirations that lies at the core of the American Dream.

As generous as he is parsimonious, when necessary, Sullivan wishes to reward the friendliness of the homeless people that he encountered in the shelter and give them each five dollars, but one of those same homeless people attacks him and steals all the money. Unconscious, the director ends up in a freight car which drives him to another city, while the vagrant is run over by a train. Since the thief also stole his shoes, which bear an identification card which marks them as Sullivan's, the dead body of the thief is mistaken for Sullivan. The director is declared dead; consequently, his death, highly publicized in the written press, becomes public knowledge and, thus, eerily real, rendering the narrative more impactful and meaningful than life itself. When Sullivan does wake up in a different city, no one is there to recognize him and to restore his former comfort – it is at this moment that he finally loses his identity as a privileged movie director. The sarcastic undercurrent in this scene exposes the pretentiousness of Sullivan's claim to authenticity by subjecting him to real, unvarnished cruelty (Dickos, 1985: 77). When the film switches from Sullivan's constructed narrative of impoverishment to bleak circumstance, his pursuit of reality renders him vulnerable, unprotected, and confused, in stark contrast to the control and freedom he could exert in the movie studio in the heart of Hollywood, "the dream factory". As a meta-cinematic note to

viewers, this sudden change of pace and tone also alerts them as to the misleading eye of the camera. Accused of trespassing and treated violently by a railway worker, Sullivan responds with violence and consequently receives a sentence of six years in labor camp.

This series of mutually conflicting absurd incidents culminates with the physical hardships which the protagonist has to endure in labor camp, and which seem to override all the philosophical concerns illustrated in the movie so far. Hungry, thirsty, and over-worked to near-death, he ironically becomes the embodiment of human suffering himself, fulfilling the narrative of self-creation inherent in the American Dream, albeit in a macabre manner The butler's comment on the undignified nature of poverty representations is more than confirmed the moment both Sullivan and the viewer realize the sheer physicality of suffering. The question of what a disenfranchised person wants or needs is recontextualized when the prisoners are allowed to watch a Disney cartoon on a weekend night, as a surprise reward for good behavior. Walking together with the other chain gang prisoners, the newly alienated, marginal Sullivan speaks best to the unexpected nature of tragedy and the consequent fragility of identity. When the chain gang trudges into the chapel and sits down to watch the movie, the moment acquires an almost sacred, ritualistic aura, and categorizations of good and bad art are no longer the question. When imprisonment and freedom (even in the form of a childish cartoon) collide, notions like superficial or unrealistic entertainment become irrelevant, because anything that can restore freedom for a number of minutes can also restore humanity. At last, Sullivan realizes that stories carry an elusive power, and that Creators lack the means to fully control their own narratives, which debunks American myths of exceptional protagonists, while also nuancing the conversation on the American Dream. In a way, by deconstructing the American Dream, the film ends up by upholding the visceral necessity for stories

Overall, the film dismisses moralistic interpretations or any attempts at labelling it a higher, more cultured brand of comedy in light of its critical apparatus. By being skeptical of its own critical assumptions and premises, the film deconstructs theories about making film or comedy and thus eludes value judgments that would deem it better or deeper than other Hollywood comedies of the era. Not only is the ending a conventionally happy one, but it is also brought about by a miraculous solution involving both luck and generosity. Determined to recover his identity, the protagonist confesses to having killed John L. Sullivan in order to gain access to the outside world. In a subtle commentary on the validity of news and media investigations, Sullivan's photograph is recognized by the girl, the director is released, and his identity, restored. If anything, Sullivan's absence has only benefited the people in his circle: the girl has become a regular actress with the studio, while the director's wife has finally married his business manager. Likely to be accused of bigamy, the wife has to grant him the divorce, which allows the couple to be reunited at the end of the story and confirm the classical screwball pattern. In the greatest stroke of irony in the movie, Sullivan rejects the studio's offer to shoot his socially conscious project, not bothered by the conclusion that a conventional formula can often be more effective: "There's a lot to be said for making people laugh. Did you know that's all some people have? It isn't much, but it's better than nothing in this cockeyed caravan" (*ST* 01:29:30 – 01:29:40).

Naturalistic and absurdist, rather than trite and stereotypical, Sturges' revisions of the comedy genre undercut the coherence of American Dream representations, and challenged the social viability of American Dream narratives. By stressing the morally problematic social mobility of his protagonists, his work called attention to the artificiality of Depression-era definitions of success, and questioned the relationship between social success and humanity, an

issue equally explored by its satirical forefather. Thus, by foregrounding *Gulliver's Travels* as satirical blueprint for its interpretation, *Sullivan's Travels* (1941) delivered the ultimate critique of American idealism and mythologies of reinvention and regeneration.

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Ghost in the Shell as a Cyberpunk Rhapsody

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The article proposes a reading of one of the constituent aspects of the feature film *Ghost in the Shell* (2017), its plot, as a compendium of influences of what is usually considered to belong to the science fiction genre. According to the reading, the movie presents ideas and an aesthetics that points to the newest trends of science fiction, such as cyberpunk, suggesting passages of many previous films, something that can help draw the constitutive master lines of the plot as similar to the concept of rhapsody, an old, if not ancestral concept. In an attempt to understand this pendulum-like movement that presents the new but is made up of the past, one of the canons of Western literature of all times was sought as the theoretical support for an attempt to explore this old facet in a futuristic film. From this point of view, concepts such as mimesis and emulation were used in this approach to the filmographic version of the homonymous manga published in Japan in 1982, a film that presents itself as a challenging puzzle whose resolution finds, in this article, a beginning and also an incentive for future studies.

Introduction

"The instinct of imitation is implanted in man from childhood, one difference between him and other animals being that he is the most imitative of living creatures, and through imitation learns his earliest lessons; and no less universal is the pleasure felt in things imitated" (Aristotle, 2000, IV: 7). In his *Poetics*, Aristotle analyses, among other things, the characteristics of written composition, in the excerpt he does not even mention textual production, on the contrary, he speaks broadly, considering the act of imitating to be atavistic to the human being, something that, additionally, it would engender some kind of pleasure. Regarding imitation, a few pages earlier he recorded that "Epic poetry and Tragedy, Comedy also and Dithyrambic poetry (...) are all in their general conception modes of imitation" (Aristotle, 2000, I: 4), considering that some forms of writing or genres – therefore dealing with the art of textual composition, are forms of imitation and, a few pages later, expands his understanding of imitation, now considering also other artistic expressions: "The poet being an imitator, like a painter or any other artist, must of necessity imitate one of three objects (…)", and follow its settings (Aristotle, 2000, XXV: 35). In summary, given the above, it can be considered that Aristotle understands imitation as something natural to human beings and, for him, art is a form of imitation.

Perhaps more important than that, the transcribed excerpt can be considered a true philosophical postulate in that it seeks the core, the ultimate cause of a phenomenon – education which, according to the philosopher, is initiated by imitation, an imitation that would be, in his words, "one instinct of our nature" (Aristotle, 2000, IV: 7). This understanding of the imitative instinct as a possibility for the foundation of knowledge had been previously explored among ancient thinkers. Without going back too far in time, Plato himself, Aristotle's teacher, frequently explores the theme of imitation in his dialogues, amid analogies between text and painting (Halliwell, 2009: 42). However, in book 10 of *The Republic*, Plato states that the mimetic poet does not have the capacity to teach because he is a person who only knows how to imitate. For Plato, when the poet sings, he does not create this something sung, as it exists in nature, a dawn, for example. The poet sings what this dawn looks like to him, that is, it is a situation of absence of veracity, because the truth is the sun rising, the poem would just be a figuration of the truth, a reading, an interpretation (Plato, 2003, X: 313-327). Aristotle disagrees and criticizes this interpretation. For him, mimesis can generate knowledge because it is also constituted by creation, by reconstruction. From then on, mimesis, imitation, emulation, also comes to be considered pedagogical in addition because it tensions possibilities: as Aristotle postulates, for the work of art to fulfil its function of provoking recognition from the public, it is up to the author to pursue verisimilitude, making the plot, or the image, or the performance, plausible and not necessarily how it happened, but how It could have happened – in the case of a fictional text, for example. Encouraging this movement of imaginative speculation, the artist instigates his imaginative capacity in the public, enabling cognitive expansion – therefore learning, the accumulation of experience/knowledge.

Many centuries later, just to mention a sporadic, but symbolic case that mimesis, which the same Aristotle, in the same *Poetics*, stated served for instruction, as seen, to purify emotions (Aristotle, 2000, VI:10) and even to generate pleasure (Aristotle, 2000, XIII: 18; XXIII: 32 and others), continues to be investigated and thematized, the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa wrote in the poem *Autopsychography*: "The poet is a feigner / Who's so good at his act / He even feigns the pain / Of pain he feels in fact. / And those who read his words / Will feel in his writing / Neither of the pains he has / But just the one they're missing." (Zenith, 2021: 63). This composition, only partially reproduced here, seems to echo Aristotle, as all of this philosopher's ideas, regarding what has been presented so far, seems to appear condensed in Pessoa's verses: they show the poet (artist) as a pretender (imitator) in addition to being a generator of knowledge and delight, as it causes the reader to discover a sensation that they do not have, the pain that the lyrical self claims to be feeling and that they do not feel – something that can provoke satisfaction as pain is generally not something appreciated.

And if the artist is able to make his audience not only learn but apprehend, retain in their understanding, something of their own human nature, this artist has reached the universal (Aristotle, 2000, IX: 14), that is, that which is common to humanity. Whether they know it or not, there are artists who, since ancient times, have dedicated themselves to imitation as a way of trying to achieve the universal. In the field of Literature, Vergil, for example, composes his *The Aeneid*, in the 1st century BC, imitating Homer's *Odyssey*, from the 8th century BC. This imitation, however, is not servile, it progresses, amplifies the concept, seeks not only pay homage by pointing out the model followed and how to overcome it. It is as if the author made a point of making it clear to his reader which paradigm he followed, which in itself is already a compliment, as no author, interested in doing a good work, will choose a bad paradigm and then, indirectly, invite the reader to see how he did it, how he surpassed the

model work. Therefore, emulation can also be considered as the continuation of a tradition and, in *The Aeneid*, it appears in different ways, in addition to the many allusions, starting with the meter, the measure of the rhythmic scheme of the verses: both books were composed with the dactylic hexameter. The hero of *The Aeneid*, Aeneas, is a navigator, like Ulysses in the *Odyssey*. The hero's story, in both works, has as its contours the departure from his homeland and, in the end, his return. In both, a council of Gods takes place to discuss the hero's fate. In both books the hero goes through the catabasis, that is, the descent into hell, where he undergoes a revelation that changes the course of history.

Following tradition, in the 16th century AD, Luiz de Camões composed what would be the founding book of the Portuguese civilization, emulating the respective ones on the Greek civilization, *Odyssey* (along with the *Iliad*), and Italian, *The Aeneid*. The hero of *Os Lusíadas* is also a navigator who leaves his homeland and then returns. In the middle of the story there is also a meeting between deities to decide on the hero's future and there is, equally in *Os Lusíadas*, a revelation given to the hero at the moment of access to the metaphysical, in this case to heaven, therefore an anabasis instead of a catabasis. Not using the Greek or Latin languages for the composition of his work, Camões was unable to use the dactylic hexameter meter, also called heroic. *Os Lusíadas* is composed using the decasyllable verse and, in song I, 3, still in the invocation, the initial part of the work, he makes clear his intention to follow the paradigm but, mainly, to overcome the model: "Let us hear no more then of Ulysses and Aeneas and their long journeyings (…) The heroes and the poets of old have had their day; another and loftier conception of valour has arisen" (Camões, 2011, I: 3), or, in other words – in Camões' own literally translated: "Cease everything that the ancient Muse sings, That another higher value rises!"[1] – the ancient Muse, in this case, is already existing poetry and, by "old", one can also understand outdated, obsolete.

Based on the reflections presented, this article proposes a reading of the science fiction film *Ghost in the Shell* (2017) as an emulation, as an imitation of previous cinematographic works, at least one of graphic animation, among other various footage of real actors, in this aspect also something that allows it to be considered as a true rhapsody, comprising countless films – not necessarily science fiction, interweaving a complex mesh of possible references and quotations, veiled, apparent or even explicit, comprising thematic, visual, sound and also in the dialogues between the characters.

The word rhapsody is usually associated with a musical genre. In this sense, the *Harvard Dictionary of Music* (2003: 770) begins its definition by pointing to the Greek root of the word:

> [fr. Gr. *rhapsōidos*, a singer or reciter of epic poetry] A section of an epic poem that is separately recited. (2) In the 19th and 20th centuries, a title chiefly for instrumental pieces. Borrowed from 18th century literature, it implied no particular form, content, or compositional method. (…) Liszt's 19 Hungarian Rhapsodies (1846–86), with their loose, episodic forms (like epic poetry), their exaggerated, contrasting moods, and their supposed folk themes, initiated a long tradition of nationalistic rhapsodies, many of which use folk or folklike materials.

[1]Translation by the authors.

As the dictionary records, the word implies a kind of miscellany, a composition made by the juxtaposition of parts that are not necessarily organic. This understanding is similar to that of the classicist Ilaria Andolfi, for whom rhapsodies were also types of compendiums of information like

> the patchworks of commonplaces compiled by erudite writers in the Renaissance (…) refer to the activity of stitching together collected materials into a consistent whole (the rhapsode as one who "sews together" pieces of song). They might have done so by singing or reciting a piece before an actual audience and/or by writing things down. (…) This does not automatically mean that he (the rhapsode, our note) wanted to compile an encyclopaedia in the modern sense of the word: he probably did not make references to his sources like Ps. Apollodorus did, nor did he seem to have registered different versions of the same plot. (...) he is an observer of the tradition, of which he could offer explanations, rectifications, and expansions. Moreover, like a rhapsode, in the narration he hid himself: he let the stories speak by themselves. (Andolfi, 2019: 32)

It is proposed here, therefore, and without neglecting that the film is derived from a pre-existing comic work, and therefore cannot exaggeratedly deviate from this initial script, a reading of the feature film *Ghost in the Shell* not just as a follower of a tradition, that of science fiction films, but also as an emulator/imitator/tributary of the genre and, at the same time, composer of a patchwork of these same influences, mentioning them, as already established, veiled or more expressly, creating a kaleidoscopic image, rhapsodic of science fiction cinema – based on the expanded concept of rhapsody, which in its principles – as seen, was restricted to music and/or epic poetry. It is as if the film deliberately set out to tell – through the countless references presented or suggested, the entire history of science fiction up to that point. Next, we will seek to describe the work chronologically, identifying possible cinematographic intertextualities, with a view to corroborating what was presented: that the cinematic version of *Ghost in the Shell* can be read as a cyberpunk emulation. More than that, it is rhapsodic because, paraphrasing the writings of Ilaria Andolfi, the film observes a tradition and offers expansions, allowing allusions and references to appear on their own (spoiler alert from now on).

Ghost in the Shell **as A Rhapsody Cyberpunk Emulation**

Directed by Rupert Sanders and released in 2017, *Ghost in the Shell* portrays the life of Mira Killian, an elite police officer. The time presented is that of the near future, indefinite, and there is, apparently, nothing very different from what today's time presents to humanity, there are no extra-terrestrial beings living among humans, for example, despite the apparently humanoid robots much more widespread than currently. It is therefore a very feasible description, as if it were a city in a few decades. The film takes place in an unidentified metropolitan region of a city like those located in the eastern part of the planet. The analogy with a Japanese city is immediate because the traffic signs are apparently in Katakana, the names of several characters are Japanese names and one of them uses exclusively the Japanese language to communicate. Furthermore, at a certain point in the film an action takes place in a bar frequented by the "Yakuza", according to the words of one of the characters.

Just a year before joining the public force, Mira had her body synthetically reconstructed after an accident. The only remaining organ from his original organism is the brain, the rest of the body is robotic although not noticeable to the eyes of the other characters in the film or to

the audience, those who watch the film. It is at this point that the film begins, amidst the processes that unite the manufactured body with Mira's brain. Motivated by some events, the character begins a search for her true essence despite being described as someone with practically no memory, due to the accident she went through and also the surgery she underwent, like a body transplant. This search for origins will make it conflict with her daily life. The synopsis already reminds us of some similar conflicts, such as those of the Nexus 6 replicants, in *Blade Runner* (1982), a film by Ridley Scott, which also involved the characters' memories and the search for their origins.

Ghost in the Shell also emulates films that are conventionally characterized as following the cyberpunk aesthetic. This term emerged after the release of the paradigmatic 1984 novel *Neuromancer*, written by William Gibson. Interestingly, Gibson did not create this term nor use it in the novel. What he seems to have created was the term "cyberspace", in the novel a place in which one of his characters "projected his disembodied consciousness into the consensual hallucination that was the matrix" (Gibson, 1988: 23). As one of the interpretations of the word "punk" indicates a person without an occupation, a wanderer, and in *Neuromancer* there are characters who could be described in this way, being frequenters of cyberspace, the association is immediate, hence the term cyberpunk. The cyberpunk aesthetic, arising from the images, colours, sounds and themes of young wanderers in cyberspace, drove countless works – not just cinematographic, which reverberate to this day.

The film version of *Ghost in the Shell* seems to emulate many works, hence its understanding as a rhapsody, as anticipated, as a composition, a miscellany, and in different ways, even sonically. This is already noticeable in the first visual information of the film, when no image has yet been shown, next to the first sign presented to the public containing the words "In the future, the line between human and machine is disappearing" there is a sound "boom", like a big bass sound that echoes lightly and deeply and lasts, reducing the volume, for a few seconds. This same resource, with a very similar timbre and sound, occurs in the opening of *Blade Runner*, a science fiction film considered a classic of the genre and from which it seems that *Ghost in the Shell* sought inspiration/emulated many times – a phenomenon that also occurs with most of the other films mimicked, which also had several of its ideas paid homage to in *Ghost in the Shell.*

From *The Matrix* (1999), the ideas for cables probably came from, which, at times, appear plugged into the characters' skulls, especially the back of the head, but at other times also into the upper parts of the head, as occurs at the beginning of *Ghost in the Shell* and, in *The Matrix*, at the moment when the character Neo leaves the matrix and starts living in Zion. There is also a movement, mentioned in both films, which causes these cables, once unplugged from the characters' necks, to cause them to fall. More than that, one can even remember the revelations of the catabasis that occurred in the *Odyssey* and also in the *Aeneid*, mentioned previously, because here too, both in *The Matrix* and in *Ghost in the Shell* there are, as expected, revelations after the downfalls of the characters that will change their story and, consequently, the film. In *Ghost in the Shell* there are two falls, one of them occurring at the beginning of the film, when the heroine is being assembled. At this moment, after unplugging the cranial cables, the body suffers a gentle fall, and from then on it is always shown from a point of view in which the audience sees it lying down, apparently being moved by liquid environments resembling a uterus, after all. It is still a kind of birth, its "creation", in the words of Dr. Ouelet, later in the film. By contrast, in *The Matrix*, when Neo is also being kind of reborn, after all he transfers his existence from inside the matrix to outside, after taking one of the coloured pills, he suffers a

big fall, leaving an environment that is also liquid and apparently very peaceful, to a kind of disposal site, from where it is rescued by inhabitants of Zion. Returning to Mira Killian, in this kind of her re-conception, she is later shown inside rotating machines. Despite a very suggested image, with few definitions and blurring, the movements of the machine around the body resemble those displayed in the spaceship in which Dr. Floyd travels in the film *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), directed by Stanley Kubrick, specifically when the flight attendant moves inside the ship using anti-gravity shoes. At these moments, the stewardess uses revolving doors, or portals, that connect one area of the aircraft to another. These portals are similar to the machines that work on the construction of Mira, at the beginning of *Ghost in the Shell*. The end of its montage is accompanied by a great profusion of colours, it is as if the final preparations were in progress, or in completion, and this would generate the emission of many lights, of different colours – which again seems to refer to *2001: A Space Odyssey*, in the famous scene of the trip to Jupiter undertaken by Dr. Dave Bowman, with the Pod, the small space exploration module.

Once Mira's construction is finished, she finds herself in a closed environment accompanied by the main scientist responsible for the job, Dr. Ouelet, played by actress Juliette Binoche (this information is important for a future moment, as will be seen in this article). Mira's first obstacle and learning, right after opening your eyes, in this new life of a synthetic body is to breathe. The hero Neo goes through the same difficulty in *The Matrix*, and in both cases what those who witness the situation can do is emphasize: "- Breath!", they say, repeatedly. After, symbolically, they are reborn in their new conditions, both Mira and Neo need rest. These two passages evidently emulate human nature in its beginnings. In both *The Matrix* and *Ghost in the Shell* the hero/heroine are considered by their peers as the chosen ones, as if they were very rare individuals, therefore representing a kind of embodied hope, the same occurring with Anakin Skywalker in *Star Wars – Revenge of the Sith* (2005), as revealed by Obi-wan Kenobi.

The city portrayed in the exterior scenes of *Ghost in the Shell* is very reminiscent of the one shown in *Blade Runner* (which in turn has Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* as one of its references, as is publicly know), with building facades marked by image projections and 3D holograms, some of them accompanied by sound announcements. Some of these ads seem like advertising for self-help products, but in this case, they offer cyber-development, as proposed in the film, that is, types of electronic implants that expand human capabilities, such as vision, arm strength, and so on. Interestingly, in *Ghost in the Shell*, one of these three-dimensional projections on theIe of a building breaks the fourth wall of the show, displays a human head that follows the camera as it flies over the city, moving in such a way as to look directly at the viewer of the movie. Still, there is always fog in the air, but the cars in *Ghost in the Shell* don't fly like in *Blade Runner*. In aerial and night shots, despite the lack of large built blocks, representing mega-corporations in *Blade Runner*, the look is practically the same in *Ghost in the Shell*, with an orange light, as if they were mercury vapour lights, very common in cities a few decades ago.

It's still the beginning of the film. Mira rested for a year and is now fully operational, already holding the rank of major and fighting crime through the police division called Section 9. This name may have some relation to the classic Sci-fi horror film called *Plan 9 from Outer Space* (1957). In her first action, Mira is on the terrace of a building, monitoring a business meeting taking place a few floors below. Practically identical to the 007 briefcases that Neo and Trinity use in *The Matrix*, the briefcases of the agents who invade the meeting monitored by Mira also transform into weapons with a flick of the wrist. Mira enters the meeting space and

starts running along the wall, taking some steps there in defiance of the force of gravity, as Trinity did in the opening moments of *The Matrix*, when this manages to escape a police raid.

Something that remains unexplained and even confusing in *Ghost in the Shell* is the external part of Mira's body, her visual appearance, what would be her skin. When she goes to enter the meeting space that was taken over by armed men, she takes off the coat she was wearing and her body appears as it was naked, but entirely covered with a tight texture, neck to feet, plasticized in appearance and in light grey tones. The erogenous zones are also very tightly covered by this kind of plastic, but it is still a corporeal appearance that may suggest, for some, a very sensual tone because all the contours of your body, buttocks and breasts, for example, are quite demarcated. This grey laminate is not displayed, not even in the form of a suggestion, as being worn or undressed by Mira, during the entire movie, and this can give the viewer the impression that it is, in fact, Mira's skin. At other moments in the film, however, she appears to have human-like skin, such as when she is in her bed wearing only a t-shirt and panties, for example, or when she undergoes repairs to some parts of her injured body, something that occurs twice, or when she takes off a diving suit, inside the boat. At these times, the tight grey plastic coverage does not appear. In the end, when she makes a lot of effort and tears this kind of grey plastic garment, it appears to be her own skin, because underneath the light grey what appears are the wires and electromechanical devices that make up her cyborg body. It seems, therefore, that this grey plastic coating was not something very well resolved in the film, maybe a continuity mistake.

Another unresolved situation, and this one a little more serious from the point of view of verisimilitude, appears immediately after Mira's intervention in the business meeting she monitored and invaded. She raises her left arm and realizes that her wrist was somehow injured in the exchange of gunfire. Next to her, at this moment, is Batou, a colleague from Section 9, who also entered the room along with other police officers, to help resolve the conflict. Mira looks at a robot geisha that she shot and apparently rendered inactive, and then looks at her own wrist. Apparently impressed, she hears from Batou: "You are not the same. It's just a robot!", while Mira turns her back and walks away in silence, apparently upset. She is then portrayed on a bed, thoughtful, and looking at her wrist wound. It is believed that, for the film's directors, it was very clear to the audience that the fact that Mira had been injured made her somehow worried in a deep, existential way, but this seems to be far from feasible, from the point of view of the film viewer. The impression given is that the event causes an artificial, forced change in the direction of the story, as if it were a solution found outside the original script, unreasonable, with the function of making the story continue, that is, a solution outside the original resourcefulness of the script's creator, what Aristotle called "Deus ex Machina", meaning something like "solution from outside of the plot, off the engine":

> As in the structure of the plot, so too in the portraiture of character, the poet should always aim either at the necessary or the probable. Thus, a person of a given character should speak or act in a given way, by the rule either of necessity or of probability; just as this event should follow that by necessary or probable sequence. It is therefore evident that the unravelling of the plot, no less than the complication, must arise out of the plot itself, it must not be brought about by the 'Deus ex Machina' – as in the Medea, or in the Return of the Greeks in the Iliad. The 'Deus ex Machina' should be employed only for events external to the drama, – for antecedent or subsequent events, which lie beyond the

> range of human knowledge, and which require to be reported or foretold (…). Within the action there must be nothing irrational (Aristotle, 2000, XV: 20-21).

Mira uses medication that is administered through two holes in the back of her neck, and the liquid is yellowish in colour, practically the same idea explored in *Equilibrium* (2002), with the difference that, in this case, the substance is administered using a small injection gun applied to the side of the neck. In both *Ghost in the Shell* and *Equilibrium*, when the protagonists stop taking medications of their own accord, their behaviour begins to change significantly.

From a certain point in the film, Mira starts to have some unexplained problem that makes her see fragments of images mixed with real ones, coming from her own eyes – as if they were interference. And the first of these instances displays the image of a tabby cat. The first occurrence of a repeated image, *déjà vu* in *The Matrix*, the errors or reconfigurations caused by/in the matrix, is also perceived by the appearance of a feline, and it is still curious because among the many images evoked by felines, in ancestral popular mythology, it is to be a kind of guide and messenger. In the case of both films, the allegory seems appropriate.

After the action of the Section 9 team, at the headquarters of this detachment, they use computers that display light projections in the air as a screen, and are controlled in the air, by the hands of the characters. This is exactly what happens, too, in *Minority Report* (2002). After this, Chief Aramaki philosophizes to his subordinate, Mira: "when we see our uniqueness as a virtue, only then do we find peace", as she seems, in some way, uncomfortable with her own identity.

Then, outside, Mira and Batou walk down the sidewalk and pass next to two girls who look like twins and are wearing identical light blue dresses and high socks. It is surprising how the colour of the dress resembles that of the twins' dress from *The Shining* (1980), a non-science fiction film, as is known. They continue walking through a downtown that is always very busy, with lots of people, many in a hurry, lots of noise, lots of visual stimuli, and it always seems to be drizzling or raining. There are many food stalls on the sidewalks, often separated by transparent plastic, with food hanging and neon lights everywhere. The cars portrayed are marked by straight lines, referring to the design of cars from the 1970s and 1980s, but always with some detail that gives an abnormal/different appearance, as if they were adaptations, due to the dimensions, the position, the general appearance of the vehicle, anyway. It's as if they were somehow tuned cars, to use the jargon of the trade. The car they often use has a design practically identical to a classic model from the 1980s, the Ferrari Testarossa, and their vehicle has a wheel with a graphic very close to that of the classic BBS model wheel, popular for decades and, perhaps for this reason, also possessing a *démodé* appearance; the entire interior of the car, from seats to doors, steering wheel and roof, is white, like the car that clergymen Andrew Brandt and John Preston ride in *Equilibrium.* This can give an idea of the discrepancy/strangeness caused by the cars portrayed: if it were an old car, it would possibly be rare to find one with a completely white interior. Cars with a similar appearance and this undefined *ethos* between old and updated are also shown in *Blade Runner* and *Equilibrium*. In *Ghost in the Shell* and also in *Minority Report*, cars and motorcycles sound like airplane engines. In the first of them, Mira ventures to ride a motorcycle without a helmet through the city and the interesting thing about the fact is that no other motorcycle is shown in the film, it seems that the only motorcycle in the city is the one that Mira rode, no others are shown in the various exterior and traffic scenes.

Noticing her injured arm in the confrontation, Mira is accompanied by Dr. Ouelet, who wears a blue apron with the same appearance as the one worn by the same actress, Juliette Binoche, when she plays another scientist in the science fiction *High Life* (2018). In this film, Juliette Binoche's character, Dibs, wears a white apron, but as the lighting in the room she inhabits is normally tinged with a bluish light, this colour ends up reflecting on her apron. The coincidences with the characters played by Binoche do not end here, as will be seen later. Again, in *Ghost in the Shell*, there is another moment of philosophical inspiration, and faced with Mira's uncertainty about the nature of her own identity, Dr. Ouelet asserts: "I can see everything, all of your thoughts, your decisions (…) you are human, people see you as human (…) of course you have a past. And with time you'll feel more and more connected to it (…) We cling to memories as if they define I but... they really don't. What we do is what defines us."

Then, another sequence of implausibility occurs: Mira and Batou go to the laboratory where the shot geisha is being analysed, as she tragically malfunctioned in the meeting taking place in the building that Mira invaded, at the beginning of the film, which is why she was shot by the major. The scientist who works on the geisha seeks to find out who reprogrammed her, hacked her, so that the robot acted as she did. As the task would be time-consuming, Mira concludes that she needs to do a "deep dive" on the geisha, something not mentioned in the film until then, which is why it appears to be a very artificial, magical solution to resolve a conflict. In other words, another "Deus ex Machina". And so, she proceeds, when she has a cable plugged into the back of her head, in the same room where she was, Mira then "projected his disembodied consciousness" (repeating the definition by William Gibson, already stated here) and enters the geisha's cyberspace. The experience begins with Mira passing through a kind of portal, with the distinction that this portal is horizontal, so she seems to fall into it, and the falling movement is clearly as if into a pool, very deep and dark, with practically all the light remaining up there, in the portal, while the camera follows the descent of the body. Second situation of the character's fall, here the analogy with the catabasis is better drawn. At the end of the fall, as if in slow motion, Mira finds herself walking in a dark and poorly defined environment of a kind of nightclub. In it, semi-static regulars are portrayed as if in a frozen world in which Mira walks and, attracted by screams and an atmosphere of tension, a little fuIther on, in a movement that suggests some type of violence being practised against a woman, follows those figures, enters through a door and down a staircase. There, she walks a little further and sees the image of a hooded person, standing, partially leaning under a lying body. Suddenly, Mira finds herself surrounded by dozens, hundreds of beings with human appearance but monochromatic, with a dark greyish tone, completely imbued with that colour, as if they were muddy people. The beings surround Mira and hold her with arms and hands, holding her, pulling her. Meanwhile, in the laboratory where the deep dive began, Mira's body, which had remained inert and unconscious on the stretcher while her mind was doing the deep dive, begins to shake frantically. Just like what happens in *The Matrix*, in *Ghost in the Shell*, when the heroine is in trouble, with her inert body on a bed and attached to a cable plugged into the back of her head (a device that makes her being, in fact, go to a kind of another dimension), to save her the solution is for someone to remove the cable plugged into the back of her head so that she returns to her body. Batou does so and she regains consciousness, scared, saying: "I know where he is", referring to the robot geisha hacker, who they are looking for to find out why she acted the way she did in the business meeting that ended with many people dead. The quick, easy and unlikely solution returns to the film, "Deus ex Machina" again: how does a

person who has no memory have a vision of the inside of a nightclub and, immediately, know which club it is, in which part of the metropolis? The passage sounds forced, again.

While the film's music seems heavily inspired by Vangelis' keyboards from the *Blade Runner* score, Mira, Batou and another colleague head to the nightclub glimpsed in the deep dive. There, as expected, there is confusion and the ambient music, which was calm, at the sound of the first gunshot, becomes a heavy electronic rock. Like Neo in *The Matrix*, Mira dodges two shots fired at her, but here at close range, and it's incredible how Batou has time, even though there are several people shooting, from different points in the club, to throw it back the coat he wears to reach the weapons he carries on his waist – without being shot a single time. Everything pacified, they go down the stairs that Mira saw in the deep dive. There a bomb explodes and she and Batou are injured. In the laboratory, after being rebuilt, Mira hears from Dr. Ouelet: "You're what everyone will become one day", and responds to her: "You don't know how alone that makes me feel".

Meanwhile, another important scientist from the company that manufactured Mira, a company with very strong ties to the government, is murdered, one of them having already died in the business meeting at the beginning of the film, with the help of the robot geisha and then three other scientists, all linked to the Mira manufacturing project. They discover that the next scientist at risk of losing her life is Dr. Ouelet, and they go in search of her. She is in traffic at that moment, accompanied by a person who uses a computer but, according to the film's dialogue, is inaccessible because "she's in transit, comms are down". "Deus ex Machina", once again, now facilitating the transition between conflicts. The question that arises is: how, in a metropolis of the future, can someone become incommunicable because he or she are "in transit" if even today this is practically impossible, given the broad reach of all telecommunication facilities?

At that moment, two apparently innocent urban cleaning employees suddenly stopped talking and changed their attitudes. The truck where the two were, which was stopped, is turned on and put in motion, apparently in an aggressive way, as if they were in a rush for something. It is then understood: the two men are as if taken by a superior force, they have brain implants that glow and emit noises. They have been hacked and begin to behave in unexpected ways. This is practically what happens in *The Matrix*, doubly so: firstly, because the agents, led by Smith, in that film, normally embody themselves in other people, on the city streets, in order to shorten the path to any confrontation. Secondly, the garbage truck with a driver incorporated by major force also becomes a protagonist at a certain point in *The Matrix*, with a powerslide U-turn and then run over of the telephone booth where Trinity was. In *Ghost in the Shell*, he hits the side of the car where Dr. Ouelet was and it flips over. Section 9 forces arrive at the scene and a huge shoot-out ensues. In the end, the truck driver is arrested and taken to interrogation by the Section 9 team. There, with a different voice, a different attitude, he refuses to accept that he did something wrong, he doesn't remember what happened, the shots, the weapons, nothing. Before his arrest, however, he and Mira engage in an extensive physical fight and the viewer is left to wonder: if the hacker only took a second to control that man's mind, why did it take him so long to leave? He preferred to be beaten by Mira, who appears to be very strong given the damage caused by her blows. During the interrogation it becomes clear that the hacker escaped from the boy's body, he is in a glass dome and cannot see what is outside of it. However, from a certain point onwards, even without seeing outside, he appears to stare into Mira's eyes and even walks towards her. She realizes that something has changed and enters the dome. The hacker once again controlled the boy's mind. She asks

who he is and he asks her to come closer, and they stand so close, almost cheek to cheek, speaking softly and close to each other's ears, that it is impossible not to remember the first meeting between Neo and Trinity, in *The Matrix*.

Other agents outside the dome ask themselves: How? How did the hacker get in there now? "Using the lie detector", suggests a police officer. The conversation with Mira, inside, continues within earshot, meanwhile they manage, through the invasion via lie detector, to geographically locate the origin of the invasion.

In the next scene they are already heading towards the hacker's bunker, inside there are bodies of people hanging from plastic bags and some of them, more regular, have the practically exact appearance of the astronauts placed in hibernation inside Discovery One, the main ship from *2001: A Space Odyssey*. In the underground bunker, Mira comes across the hacker and is made his prisoner. They begin a brief dialogue and Mira finds out that she was also manufactured by the same scientists of him, in the same company, but his project was discontinued due to deficiencies and he was discarded, as were dozens of others before him, all murdered in the end, and he managed to escape of this destination. Kuze, the hacker, tries to convince Mira that she's been fooled, and says in a philosophical way: "Your shell belongs to them but not your ghost. Your ghost is yours, remember that". He releases her, his colleagues arrive and Kuze escapes. When Batou approaches, Mira also runs away and goes to Ouelet's house, wants to know the truth, how many experiments were done before her? What did they do to the people? Who got them? Were the few memories she has true? Dr. Ouelet clarifies everything, she put all the blame on Mr. Cutter, owner of Hanka Robotics, the company that manufactures Mira's synthetic body. Mira's memories of her parents being killed by terrorists were false, explains Ouelet. They were implanted in her mind to reinforce her anti-crime stance. Ouelet has been very involved with the project since the beginning, and through several attempts, managed to perfect the technique of brain implantation in a synthetic body until reaching the perfection represented by Mira's existence.

Mira runs away, goes diving, disconnects. She's confused. Batou meets her on the boat and they talk. Batou asks why she didn't stop Kuze, to which she responds: "I don't know who to trust anymore", a question that echoes the one asked by Padmé to Anakin Skywalker when he invites her to dethrone the Chancellor and rule together. Astonished, Padmé says: "I don't know you anymore!", in *Star Wars – Revenge of the Sith*. Batou continues with the boat and leaves her at a pier, where police forces arrive to stop her. She is taken to Hanka Robotics where Cutter discovers that "we cannot control her", therefore "she is no longer a viable asset", in the words of Cutter himself, who orders Dr. Ouelet to give Mira a lethal injection. Mira observes the dialogue from a side room, she is tied to a chair and sedated, like Morpheus from *The Matrix* when captured, just observing things. Instead of the lethal injection, however, Ouelet gives Mira a kind of antidote for her lethargy, frees her from the handcuffs and encourages her to escape, all very quickly, while Cutter, from the next room, calls security. Cutter shoots Ouelet and the scientist, having completed her career, remains in the viewer's memory as a tireless worker seeking to improve her research and her dreams, capable of donating her own life for them, exactly the same role she played and *High Life,* the same actress.

Mira visits a lady who would be her mother, and she invites her for tea in Avalon, a very populous residential condominium apparently inhabited by the working classes, practically the same recipe as the Oracle visited by Neo, in *The Matrix*, in which Neo hears assertively: "You are not the one", in which Mira is asked: "Who are you?". In both films, as a possible

backdrop, the issue of technology corrupting the world. Telling the story of her missing daughter, the woman says: "And then one day, the police came". "And then one day" is also what Kevin Flynn, the main character of *Tron: Legacy* (2010), says, adding: "I got in".

Following a wiretap planted in Aramaki's office, Cutter realizes that Section 9 as a whole is about to rebel because Mira discovered everything. Cutter states: "The virus is spreading", which echoes the words of agent Smith, in *The Matrix*, when agent Smith speaks aggressively about humans with the captive Morpheus: "There is another organism on this planet that follows the same pattern (of a plague, our note). Do you know what it is? The virus. Human beings are a disease, a cancer of this planet"

Cutter sends his men to ambush Aramaki in the parking lot where his car is. The car has a design practically identical to that of the Citroen Xantia from the 1990s, a car that had among its features that it allowed the driver to control the height of the car's suspension, so it was very common to see, at the time, cars parked with the suspension completely lowered, causing the bodywork to almost touch the ground – in the same way that Aramaki's car was, in the film, after the hail of bullets to which it was subjected in the attack. Curiosities aside, it is interesting to observe the effort of the film's art direction to create this retro, nostalgic look, while mimicking previous films and, perhaps, even mentioning the active suspension of a car that caught the market's attention, for this characteristic, a few decades ago. The men approach the car, the rain turns heavier. Aramaki retaliates against the shooters' ballistic attack, kills the three and finds time to philosophize: "Do not send a rabbit to kill a fox", he says. Rabbit is also the image of movement, in *The Matrix*, (and before, referred to as *The Matrix*, in *Alice in the Wonderland*) after Neo's computer wakes him from sleep and displays on its screen: "Follow the white rabbit". Here, rabbit is the pursued, in *Ghost in the Shell*, the pursuer.

Mira takes the motorcycle and heads to a "lawless zone" in the city, as shown, seeking, in some way, to meet Kuze. In an undefined location, he seems to experience moments alongside a robot geisha. Kuze apparently senses Mira's approach, possibly through telepathy, and opens his eyes, moving his head upwards in a movement very similar to that made by Luke Skywalker when he is called, in thought, by Darth Vader, in the final scenes of *Start Wars – The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), to which the young man responds: "Father!".

Mira and Kuze find themselves in the lawless area, as if it were an old and abandoned part of the city, but with buildings still standing. One of these buildings is a small house that they both frequented before they were kidnapped by Hanka Robotics to become an experiment. Mira sees a kind of hallucination in that house which, in slow motion, shows the strong light of a helicopter illuminating a police raid, the house burning and two young people being forcibly removed from inside. Outside you can see Mr. Cutter. The sound of the helicopter and the slow-motion movements are reminiscent of the Morpheus rescue scene in *The Matrix*. They were, Mira and Kuze, young militants and, as described in the film, they only had each other. Now that they meet again in the same place, they see that there is their name written on the walls, and they remain in practically the same way, they only have each other. Says Kuze: "Come with me, into my network, we will evolve beyond them, and together we can revenge what they have done to us", a construction also similar to that pronounced by Anakin Skywalker to Padmé in *Star Wars – Revenge of the Sith*: "I am more powerful than the Chancellor; I... I can overthrow him. And together, you and I can rule the galaxy... make things the way we want them to be!".

A spider-shaped robot tank controlled remotely by Cutter appears to complicate the almost romantic scene. The film seems to explore the symbolism that animals historically have

in society to convey subliminal messages to its audience: first it was the cat, messenger, then the rabbit and the fox, this symbol of resilience, now the spider which, despite also commonly representing persistence is known to be one of the most feared animals to humanity, along with venomous animals, the animals that most repulse people. To enhance the sensation, there's nothing like a soundtrack basically made up of trumpets intoning vibrant low and stridently metallic sounds, along with explosions of deep bass like those heard at the beginning of the film.

The spider-tank fires many shots at Mira who, behind a concrete column, sees that same concrete column, around her, being shattered by the armoured vehicle's artillery, this is the impact effect also portrayed in the sequence in which Neo and Trinity invade the bunker to rescue Morpheus in *The Matrix*. And, to escape from a spider-tank, movements from *Spider-Man* (2002) like those that Mira uses to climb places, making the movement quite implausible and very easy to detect which was done not with traditional filming, but with computer graphics resources. At this point, the film's soundtrack becomes quite dramatic and even overlaps the sound of the countless shots being fired, a sound obfuscation feature that also occurs in action scenes in *The Matrix*. Using a lot of force to open the access door to the interior of the spider-tank, Mira's body appears to be swollen and cracked, as occurs with Tetsuo in *Akira* (1988), when his manifestations begin to occur. And just open the door of the spider-tank and it magically explodes and, voilà, happy ending: Aramaki kills Cutter, Mira meets her mother again – now with the certainty that it really is her mother, and Sector 9 returns to operating successfully.

In the end, like a Neo who sends his message to humanity through a telephone booth in *The Matrix*, Mira passes on her message, which is nothing more than practically a compilation of everything philosophical that she heard during the story: "My mind is human, my body is manufactured. I am the first of my kind, but I won't be the last. We cling to memories as if they define us, but what we do defines us. My ghost survived, to remind the next of us, that humanity is our virtue. I know who I am, and what I am here to do".

Conclusion

As expected in a science fiction film, there are instigating projections about what life will be like in a few years, for example, with the holographic home mirror, which shows the image of the right hand raised when Mira raises her right hand – i.e., not the inverted image of traditional mirrors; with traffic signs on the roads, bright and dynamic, among other small finds. The film also seems to emulate other science fiction films by introducing moments of more philosophical dialogue, but here it doesn't go much beyond good intentions. Overall, the philosophical moments are simplistic and often flirt with self-help. At the end, which would be the moment for a more substantial message, the same thoughts presented during the story are repeated, something that, on the one hand, does not add anything and can be boring, on the other, it can also be a reinforcement, an aid to memorization.

In terms of emulating not only a style, science fiction or cyberpunk, but also a myriad of previous films, allowing it to be characterized, therefore, also as a rhapsody, *Ghost in the Shell* is impressive. In this sense, one can imagine that, perhaps, the same could be said about a few films.

Like the much mentioned and referred to *The Matrix*, ultimately, *Ghost in the Shell* can, however, be considered a film for children and teenagers, or a film for people who are not very demanding in terms of plot. And in this sense, they don't differ much from mainstream cinema

and series, which is sad to see. It seems that creators, producers, directors and studios, in an attempt to reach a greater number of spectators, to increase their audience and thus also their revenue, bring down the level of cultural repertoire demanded for the appreciation of their productions – which makes everyone lose. Thus, they exaggerate in visual resources, in the use of implausible solutions to conflicts and, to return to the classics, they ignore Aristotle's timeless postulates which, although they do not necessarily need to be followed, can also, very usefully, not be ignored. As the Greek indicates, after imitation, another force of human nature is "the instinct for 'harmony' and rhythm" (Aristotle, 2000, IV: 7), and this harmony and rhythms are achievable, in the work of art, if the imitation is well done, coherent, consequential, justified, possessing unity.

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Identity: The New Final Frontier. Singularity and Multitudes in *The Very Pulse of the Machine*

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Keywords

sci-fi; feminism; identity; singularity; adaptation; post-humanism.

This article deals with the question of identity and individuality as explored in Michael Swanwick's short story, *The Very Pulse of the Machine*, and its subsequent adaptation into a short animated film. The story follows the surviving explorer Martha Kivelson in her attempt to save herself after an accident on Io, while also dragging the lifeless body of her partner, Julier Burton back to their lander. Our aim is to unearth the potentialities of the dissolution of individual identity boundaries, followed by the joining with the singular mega-consciousness, while also employing a feminist reading of the text as a safe haven for womanhood and the female expression of commonality. The genre of science fiction offers us the appropriate medium for such daring considerations and interrogations, liberating both the authors of the texts, as well as the reader from traditional gazes and expectations. Our sight is thus turned to the treatment of identity as the *new final* frontier, where limitation and glass ceilings are shattered in a new understanding thereof.

Science-Fiction continuously pushes our boundaries of understanding. While it may have begun its flow in the enigmatic desire for the "ultimate frontier", attaining the till-then abstraction of outer space, the genre has continuously morphed into a profound inquiry into identity, on the one hand, and a struggle for increasing the porosity of conceptual borders on the other.

It is important to understand the cultural hold the American context exacted on the genre of science-fiction. While the beginnings of sci-fi writing were modest in the New World, with European works setting the tone and the scene for what was a highly innovative medium, the genre flourished in the U.S.A. after the middle of the 20th century. As Gary Westfahl notes that "after the end of World War II, a victorious United States had the power to impose its culture on other nations ravaged by war, and its science fiction became prominent" (2015: 17). As such, the American model for the genre became the main reference point, literally giving it its very name and direction. It comes as no surprise that so much of what constitutes the American mindset also made its way to a central position within the genre. The constant push for and fascination with the frontier, the very limit of human capability and physicality becomes a main concern. Richard Slotkin delves into a comprehensive analysis of the impact and weight the myth of the frontier truly bears on the American cultural psyche. He states beyond any doubt that the frontier acts not only as a mark of nostalgia, but as the point of conversion between numerous other so-called mythological strands that would piece together the American character. While it is true that the frontier was the penchant of the adventure stories of heroic figures attempting to conquer

wilderness, Slotkin makes a point in isolating the frontier among other constructs that build Americanness, saying: "Its ideological underpinnings are those same 'laws' of capitalist competition, of supply and demand, of Social Darwinian 'survival of the fittest' as a rationale for social order, and of 'Manifest Destiny' that have been the building blocks of our dominant historiographical tradition and political ideology" (1998: 15). In other words, the propensity of the American character to tackle the frontier, the ever-elusive moving target, encapsulates both a past history of conquest and subjugation of the indigenous population, as well as a present and future concern with attaining and maintaining a peak position, regardless of potential moving elements. Those who do manage to push their own limits to attain and open the frontier would implicitly win the race to superiority and centrality, furthermore proving divine favor.

John Rieder explores the inherent connection between the American spirit and that of their "mythic pioneering past" (2015: 167), which does lend itself well to the new conquests awaiting beyond the confinement of our planet, but there is more to the manifestation of the myth within the scope of science-fiction. To Rieder, it becomes clear that there is "a second version of the SF frontier, just as entangled with ideologies of progress and destiny as the first", that is "the vanguard constituted by technological innovation", which, when combined with the penchant for territorial conquest, would inevitably "participate in the ideology of American exceptionalism" (167). The discourse surrounding the myth of the frontier oftentimes ignores one element that is inherent to the space represented by the very notion of the reality of a frontier. In the public imagination, this space is perceived as a vast wilderness, an emptiness awaiting the civilizing force of the explorer. But the frontier presupposes intersection. As Rieder himself notes, it is "a meeting place between cultures or civilizations, a borderland or contact zone where there are always two sides to any story, and where exploring the radical differences between those two sides often becomes the heart of the adventure" (167). Historically, this has referred to the social tensions that arose between the colonizing power and the colonized population, creating the new mental space of the borderlands, which Gloria Anzaldúa explores in her 1987 seminal work, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. She defines the border as far more encompassing than geography, but lending itself to "preoccupations with the inner life of the Self, and with the struggle of that Self amidst adversity and violation; with the confluence of primordial images; with the unique positionings consciousness takes at these confluent streams" (s. p.). It does become evident, then, that the frontier is not simply an external consideration, but very much so an internal one, a catalyst in the shaping of identity. What is more, as we will explore later in this paper when looking closer at Swanwick's short story, it will be interesting to observe the changes to an existing identity when faced with the new frontier, the melding and dissolution of inherent elements with a larger scope.

The image of the frontier has consistently been associated with considerations of the environment. The conquest of the frontier has traditionally been a struggle to overcome the adversity of the wilderness, or the inhospitable landscape. This construct was extrapolated to sci-fi, where the newness of the environment is contiguous with the alien world, meant to challenge the very essence of humanity. Especially in light of the unexpected dramatism and profound ramifications of the obliteration exacted by the atomic bombs, it becomes nearly inescapable that the contact zone between humanity and nature itself was altered beyond recovery. Priscilla Wald takes note of the multitudes of technological bursts that happened during and immediately after World War II, which essentially pushed the human being beyond

the limits of evolution, stating: "human evolution had taken millennia; this new technology gave humankind the ability to destroy the world in hours", with the immediate effect being that "the weird and horrible had become the trite and obvious", thus creating the perfect cultural environment for the proliferation of sci-fi, on the one hand, and its investigation in what the nature of the human being would become under these new circumstances, as "the human species was contingent and evolving; it was not even necessarily at the top of the food chain" (2015: 179-181), on the other. It can be argued, therefore, that the new frontier of the genre has moved within. The English novelist J. G. Ballard points out that sci-fi cannot possibly rely on the same tropes of conquest or "the rocket ships and ray guns of Buck Rogers" for long, as this will inherently lead to the nearly inevitable fall of the genre into a cultural "limbo occupied by other withering literary forms" that failed to invest in the depth they explored (2017: 101). While Ballard's view that the preoccupation with space fiction is limitative and even juvenile remains a contentious claim, his argument for a turn toward the exploration of "*inner* space" and his desire "to see more psycho-literary ideas, more meta-biological and meta-chemical concepts, private time-systems synthetic psychologies and space-times, more of the sombre half-worlds one glimpses in the paintings of schizophrenics, all in all a complete speculative poetry and fantasy of science" (103) paints a vivid picture of the potentiality of the genre itself, which has in the decades following Ballard's manifesto met his aspirations of profundity and turned the internal explorations of the human psyche into the new frontier.

One text that would successfully and subtly embody the preoccupation manifested by sci-fi with the inner space of the human psyche and the frontier of identity is Michael Swanwick's short story, *The Very Pulse of the Machine*, published in 2016 in the science fiction magazine *Clarkesworld*, and its Netflix short animated film adaptation, directed by Emily Dean and included in the widely popular series, *Love, Death & Robots*. The story follows the intrepid explorer, Martha Kivelsen, in her mission to survive a sudden crash that kills her partner, Juliet Burton, on Io, the Jovian moon, in a race against time and a space inhospitable to human existence. We are not given a context for the accident that led to the current situation, beyond the fact that "The moon rover had flipped over at least five times before crashing sideways against a boulder the size of the Sydney Opera House", but the disembodied voice of the dead Burton emanating from the radio seems to be giving both the readers, as well as Martha a clear appreciation of her particular circumstances: "Hell" (s. p.). She is walking in between the two figures of Jupiter and Daedalus' plume, and while they are indeed fixtures meant for orientation, one cannot help but wonder if walking *in between* them is a conscious decision of not walking *towards* them, as salvation seems to be found away from the two pillars. Rather than standing on the shoulders of giants, Martha seems to be carrying the two mythological giants of old on her own shoulders, with the constancy of her own steps moving through the perceived void: "Nothing to it" (s. p.). On the one hand, Jupiter looms truly large, reflecting its magnificence as the first and largest planet of our system, and yet subject to a process of shrinking, through the Kelvin-Helmholtz mechanism, as it generates more heat from within than it receives on the surface from the Sun, having diminished to half its original size (Irwin 2009: 4-5). This process of shrinking is especially symbolic for the gas giant if we consider the fact that its entire make-up included all the elements that could have made it not into a planet, but into a star, had it not been for the perceived randomness of the universe. However, we would be remiss to consider this randomness as simply the absence of an intentional pattern within the cosmic scheme, particularly when looking at Jupiter as a "failed star", as "randomness was reconceptualized in scientific fields so that it is not mere gibberish but a

productive force essential to the evolution of complex systems" (Hayles, 2015: 331-332). Within the poetics of the text, the nature of Jupiter, reliant on the heat of its core, cooling on the surface, diminishing gradually in a state of isolation, is juxtaposed to the universality of the finale, where the individual relinquishes her own insularity to join the multitudes, simultaneously dissolving, while also expanding the new entity.

Martha embarks on a transformative journey of salvation and survival, which oscillates between its imagined potentiality to its factual actuality. Symbolically following the name of the ancient inventor of the labyrinth, she walks with the volcanic plume and depression looming large over her trek. Much like Daedalus' ancient statues, so life-like that they were likely to truly come to life, Martha drags Burton's corpse, in what seems like a sentimental determination to rescue it from the oblivion of being left behind on Io. With a whole in her head reminiscent of Jupiter's eye of the storm, but filled by Martha with the sulfuric dust of Io, the body gradually becomes more and more sentient and vocal. Her syncopated discourse, marked by the clicks that precede it, mimic the pulsations of a heart, a new life form being resuscitated, away from the warmth and life-giving force of the sun, but rather animated by a new impulse. Both women emerge from the destroyed relic of the rover, into the blinding whiteness of the sulfuric snow, both born anew, in a new cycle, albeit initially unaware. The almost alchemical presence of sulfur as an element that entirely surrounds them bears profound implications within their narrative, reminding the reader of the concern alchemy had "not only with the mysteries of matter but also with those of creation and life; it sought to harmonize the human individual with the universe surrounding him" (Read, 1952: 72). It is no mere coincidence perhaps that the association between sulfur and the human soul is also rendered in the story, as Io seems to be the embodiment of a Being endowed with a beating heart.

Within the fray of the storm that caused their accident, Martha is rendered blind. Her sense of self-preservation kept her alive in the crash, and it is now the driving force behind her actions. In an almost religiously charged moment, "Martha got down on her hands and knees. And as she did, just as quickly as the blizzard had begun – it stopped" (Swanwick, 2016: s. p.). The unmediated connection with Io seems providential, as the blinding storm stops, and she regains her bearings. She realizes that she has access to sufficient oxygen for the following forty hours, meaning she would need to reach her safe haven before that. It once again does not escape the reader that the trek she is about to embark on takes on a similar note as the Biblical Exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt. She too is attempting to weather the deadly desert led by the prophetic voice of Io. What is more, the very number, forty, is a Biblical leitmotif, used repeatedly to signal "two distinct epochs" (Coogan, 2008: 116). God flooded the Earth during forty days and forty nights of rain. Noah waited for forty days before emerging from the ark. But most importantly for our analysis of this passage, it took the Hebrews forty years of wandering in the desert before being delivered to their Promised Land; Martha only has forty hours on Io to deliver herself to a next stage. It is not only herself that she aims to deliver, but Burton's body as well. Somehow, Burton seems to be all that Martha was not, the ideal she would model herself on, the assumed erudite winner, capable of reciting from the great poets, while also successfully fulfilling her role as an intrepid explorer. Martha cannot let go of "it", the ideal she has been dutifully carrying around, despite the oftentimes crippling weight that it comes with. Much like she strapped herself within the rover, she straps herself to the embodiment of her aspirations for her own existence, otherwise "she'd be damned if she was going to leave it behind" (Swanwick, 2016: s. p.).

The loneliness she finds herself in is a cause for elation, the break in the regularity of her existence presupposes a return to that "inner space" that would allow for the true exploration. Amidst "the most desolate landscape in the universe", Martha decides to add the most vivid colors to her own vision and perception, thus exhibiting the freedom of self-determination mirrored by her immediate reaction to her current situation: "There was nobody else on all of Io. Nobody to rely on but herself. Nobody to blame if she fucked up. Out of nowhere, she was filled with an elation as cold and bleak as the distant mountains. It was shameful how happy she felt" (s. p.). The same unfiltered elation filled both women upon their finding the dazzling field of sulfur crystals. Their immediate reaction and response to the sight before them, believing they had stumbled upon a new life-form which would earn them a place in the history books, is quickly crushed by their male supervisor, and yet their excitement remains intact. One could argue that the understanding the women feel when gazing upon the plains of Io thus far perceived and described as desolate is a much more profound one. They seem to have begun the process of establishing a connection with the Being that they will eventually dissolve into, albeit still unconscious. In fact, this connection surfaces gradually. Martha begins her forty-hour trek alongside the body of Burton by dismissing the latter's disembodied voice, the voice of "Not. Bur. Ton." as "you're just the voice of my subconscious" (s. p.), bringing to light what had been relegated to the shadows. The connection between Martha's consciousness and the mega-consciousness of the Being had already been established, and it is now being allowed to flourish on the surface. It further begs the question of whether the mega-consciousness of the Being that is Io might also be construed as a collective one. Upon investigation, Martha has the following exchange with the voice of Io:

> 'I was here before, right? People like me. Mobile intelligent life forms. And I left. How long have I been gone?'
> Silence. 'How long –' she began again.
> 'Long time. Lonely. So very. Long time'. (s. p.)

The implication, then, is that Burton and Martha are only two of the latest to contribute to the entity. It contains multitudes. It acts simultaneously as the creation, as well as devourer of individual entities. It in fact blurs the borders between individuals and identities, allowing for the porosity of a new-found definition to engulf Martha. While she is the earthling, the explorer Martha Kevilson, she is also part of a larger "I", the innumerable entity. They were all her, and she was all of them. Io, thus, contains multitudes, and like any machine, it cannot exist beyond its elements, but they too cease their insular existence once engaged in the pulse of the machine.

The title of the short story references one of Wordsworth poems, *She Was a Phantom of Delight*, a love poem addressed to Mary Hutchinson (Ward 1997: 619). While the poet has been the subject of intense scrutiny from feminist critics, with "the now prevailing view that [he] rendered his poetry's women silent if not brain-dead in order to make a male voice predominate" (611), it is only fair that the text be reappropriated for a feminist reading thereof. As such, in keeping with the symbols of the mega-consciousness exhibited by Io, the following verses take on a new meaning:

> And now I see with eye serene
> The very pulse of the machine;

> A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
> A Traveller between life and death;
> The reason firm, the temperate will,
> Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
> A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
> To warn, to comfort, and command;
> And yet a Spirit still, and bright
> With something of angelic light. (Wordsworth, s. p.)

It is Martha's eventual serene realization of the living organism that she would become part of that brings her mission to fruition. There is a sense of predestination in the steps taken, walking in between Jupiter and Daedalus, between life and death, a "planned" woman ready to join the Being that Io seems to be. The reference to a machine presupposes the interconnectedness of multitudes, each element pulsating in the larger rhythm of the machine that encompasses it, but that it also constructs, as the identity of both the machine as well as its composing elements are intertwined – there would be no machine without the sum of its elements, while they would not operate on their own. Martha herself becomes part of the enigmatic machine that engulfs her. The first word of the short story, "Click", echoes the title in its mechanical pulse. It triggers the impossible dialogue between Martha and what proves to be her own "phantom of delight". In fact, it is the first poem quoted by Burton, as an apparent non-sequitur to her initial statement:

> Sulfur is. Triboelectric.
> Don't hold it in. What are you really trying to say?
> And now I see. With eye serene. The very. Pulse. Of the machine. A pause. Wordsworth. (Swanwick, 2016: s. p.)

The physical qualities of sulfur, in that it allows for an exchange of electrical charge between two objects sliding over one another, take on a nearly alchemical valence once more. It is not only sulfur, but a free-flow of information and melding together of consciousnesses, and with each step, the pulse of the machine is powered. Martha's interaction with the machine leads to the logical conclusion that if it does indeed exist, then it must do so with a purpose. If it exists as a machine, then it must have been created, which the voice of "Not. Bur. Ton" confirms, calling Martha its creator. It then follows that if there is a creator, then there must also be a purpose behind the creative effort: "So she asked, 'If you're a machine, then what is your function? Why were you made?' 'To know you. To love you. And to serve you'" (s. p.). Io's insistence on communicating to Martha seems to be fulfilling the first purpose, of knowing her. Once knowledge is established, love follows, only to be concluded with "serving" her, which one cannot help but wonder if it is used solely with its intransitive value, or if Io's lacunar speech pattern might also allow for its transitive side to coexist, further cementing the interconnected exchange between Martha and the mega-consciousness, an exchange which is proven to go beyond the sarcastic quips and seemingly unconnected quotes. Martha loses her way and goes off track, reaching the deadly and aptly named Lake Styx, an accumulation of molten sulfur, with no chance of retracing her steps and reaching her destination under the palpable time crunch. Her suicidal ideation is stopped in its track by Io, as it builds a bridge right before Martha's eyes, allowing her safe passage "from Death into Life" (s. p.). Death was

the potentiality, but life was her reality, as aided by Io, and reality can only be perceived away from the abstractions of time, past or future, and only in the place of the continuous present. Everything exists, all at the same time on Io, which is suggestive of the constant process of creation.

It is interesting to note that despite the uninterrupted connection between Burton's body and Io, consistently fed by the triboelectric nature of sulfur, "Not. Bur. Ton" is not omniscient. The neural pathways are fired up, activated and connected, but not identified with Io altogether. They still maintain a separation, which limits her. The knowledge she has and which she imparts with Martha is filtered through the mental capabilities of Burton while she was alive, so the voice cannot know more than Burton and can only communicate through what was already there in Burton's brain. As such, she cannot alert Martha of the sudden eruption that happens on Io, as she is only superficially linked to it. The crater gapes before them, brimming with molten sulfur, an ocean of unfathomable depth, connected to the very center. Like the primordial soup, it invites Martha and Burton to join all else, the multitudes it contains. The lander destroyed, salvation obliterated, Martha only has one option for survival – dissolution: "Io claimed – had said – that if she threw herself in, it would be able to absorb her, duplicate her neural patterning, and so restore her to life. A transformed sort of life, but life nonetheless. 'Throw Burton in,' it had said. 'Throw yourself in. Physical configuration will be. Destroyed. Neural configuration will be. Preserved. Maybe'" (s. p.). It becomes a symbolic conclusion to a steadfast struggle for survival for Martha, and for maintaining the human custom for Burton. The resistance espoused by the explorer only leads to seismic reactions. Letting go initiates a liberating flight. The reader is given no direct conclusion, no clarifying verdict. We are left to wonder whether Burton did transcend her death and connect to Io, accessing the mega-consciousness, or if it was all a matter of Martha's own consciousness having been impaired by the shock of the crash and the overuse of stimulants. However, it does beg the question of whether identity would survive, once the body was dissolved, if the neural pathways would contribute to the larger entity, while still maintaining their original singularity.

The very question of the mega-consciousness can also be interpreted through the lens of a most current concern – that of the rise of intelligences greater than those of human beings, computers or machines that would exceed our own capabilities. Vernor Vinge deals with this concern as explored in works of sci-fi, arguing that "the Singularity… is a point where our old models must be discarded and a new reality rules" (2017: 353), including "immortality (or at least a lifetime as long as we can make the universe survive) would be achievable" (360), and yet one must take into account that even such a mega-consciousness as the one represented by Io seems to espouse the need to evolve and develop, to grow and engulf more elements, lest it lose itself into the oblivion of perpetual self-referentiality, which would be rendered sterile without further growth. As Vinge argues, the question of self and ego, situated at the very heart of most philosophical exploration will inevitably need a profoundly different treatment when explored in the context of its apparent dissolution into the super-humanly amplified intelligence. The argument bears within it the counter-argument as well. The issue itself is ambivalent as it begs the question of the very nature of the human being – if Martha does dissolve, would she be the recipient of the potential immortality promised by the joining with Io, or would she be relinquished to the abysses of Lake Styx, having fed a voracious machine her life force and ample energy?

The 17-minute long animated adaptation of Swanwick's short story reimagines the beginning. It begins with the minutes prior to the accident, with the eruption that opens the black hole of molten sulfur from the start, choosing to categorize Kivelson as the intrepid, daring explorer, and Burton as the cautious, bookish partner. If we consider the fact that "Not. Bur. Ton" explicitly states that there is nothing that she could know that the alive Burton did not, it is interesting to note that the debut of the episode is built rather as its denouement, not only offering an explanation for what happened prior to the accident, but building a foreshadowing effect to what the end is for the two women. Stuck in a never-ending sea of yellowness, suggestive of the ambivalent and oftentimes contradictory reactions espoused by Martha, oscillating between jealousy and joy, much like the cultural symbolism of the color itself, the surviving explorer does not go through the same almost sentimental justification for dragging her partner's lifeless body back to their lander. The directors simply do away with this emotional response, and connect Martha to Burton through physical need – the former's oxygen tank being defective, she has to connect herself to the latter's, unable to remove the tank.

The journey thus begins with the gaping hole in Burton's face being filled with golden dust, in a nearly ritualistic gesture. What strikes the viewer is the switch from barren land to Martha trudging along in the blue violet darkness of Io, surrounded by the undulating shapes of women, while Burton recites poetry, trying to communicate. Hands extend and open towards them, building a majestic image of Io as the epicenter of womanhood and female expression. It allows the reader the conclusion that the two women found themselves in a profound exploration of a predestined path, led to the common mega-consciousness of all women as embodied by Io, capable of repairing the gaping hole in Burton's orbit and letting her loom larger than life. Rather than feeding Martha the answer directly, Burton prods her, giving her the crumbs that are meant to lead her to the inevitable verdict – Io is a machine, a majestic entity, whose apparent barren landscape changes into highly vibrant and alive the moment Kivelson adjusts the spectrum of perception. In other words, Io reveals itself to her when she is ready to switch her perspective. Io is barren only when perceived through the same lens that limited human, or even patriarchal reality would be looked at, much like Hols' patronizing reaction to the fascination felt by the two women on their first expedition.

Reading this moment of visual adjustment through the lens of *écriture feminine*, we cannot help but draw a parallel with the liberation felt by women when they allow themselves the removal of the shackles of patriarchal perception, and the embracing of womanhood away from the proverbial male gaze, as "all feminist theories resist the ideological self-representations of masculinist cultural text that traditionally offers itself as the universal expression of a homogeneous 'human nature'" (Hollinger, 2003: 125). The entirety of Io's wavelengths flow directly into the mind of Burton, animating her, while also allowing her to animate them as the stirrer of life, if not the implicit creator. As such, Burton rises and switches roles with Martha, who collapses in her arms, carried away between the blue violet vibrating waves, reminiscent of intuition and affection. The aggressive juxtaposition of the suffocation she feels with her earth-bound suit unable to function and maintain her life force, she once more switches from yellow to blue violet, joining *with* Io. The adaptation proves more generous once again as we see Kivelson diving into the depths of Lake Styx, and follow her graceful flight through a universe of stars and starlight, eventually transcending into a being of light, golden and luminous, whose life force produces ripple upon ripple of energy on the small moon. One is left to wonder if the final words, uttered as the image pans out to reveal an

illuminated Io and the Orbital watching over it, "Earth station. Come in. This is Martha Kivelson", reach the station prior to the descent, or as its aftermath, once more allowing for the open-ended ambiguity of uncertainty to stir within the viewer.

The feminist reading of the texts, both written, as well as visual, allows a heightened sense of identity exploration. Donna Haraway stated that "Science fiction is generically concerned with the interpretation of boundaries between problematic selves and unexpected others and with the exploration of possible worlds in a context structured by transnational technoscience" (*apud* Hollinger, 2003: 132), which further cements the natural connection between sci-fi as a genre and feminist thought, despite the generally espoused view of masculinist sci-fi. *The Very Pulse of the Machine* does not overtly display a political agenda, and yet one does not need to go too far underneath the surface to access the liberating force of the feminist interpretation. It is reminiscent of Christine de Pizan's medieval masterpiece, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, in which each new representative woman adds herself to the very creation of the protective city that would house and offer sanctuary to all women. We are, therefore, witnesses to a larger organism, a connection between individuals. We see a similar complex machine in Swanwick's Io. Burton and Kivelson are simply the latest to join *with* Io, where even the use of the prepositional verb suggests not just a passive abandonment of the self, but an alliance in action. We are faced with a dissolution of identity borders, with the promise of the loss of only the container and the everlasting life of the mind. Identity thus transcends the corporeal limitations of the individual and is fulfilled and truly accomplished only when mirrored and mirroring others, away from singularity and isolation, and into multitudes. Joanna Russ states that "it's the difficulty of science fiction, of genuine speculation: how to get away from the traditional assumptions which are nothing more than traditional straitjackets" (2017: 208), and *The Very Pulse of the Machine* does do just that – it obliterates and subverts expectations in its treatment of identity, while also rendering the voices of women crystal clear, even through syncopated poetic communication.

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Littérature et film en classe de FLE. Ce que la transécriture cinématographique pourrait apporter au texte littéraire. Quelques réflexions

Literature and Film in Class of French as a Foreign Language. What Cinematographic Transcription Would Give to the Literary Text. Some Remarks

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Dans la didactique des langues étrangères, le rôle du texte littéraire a subi de nombreuses mutations au fil des différentes méthodes qui se sont succédé. Dans cet article, nous allons réfléchir, d'abord, sur les spécificités du texte littéraire et sur les avantages de son usage en classe de langues, pour nous concentrer, ensuite, sur l'exploitation didactique de l'adaptation cinématographique qui pourrait avoir des retombées importantes en termes d'acquisition et d'apprentissage. Elle permet, en effet, de restituer la dimension orale au texte écrit et de travailler donc des habilités multiples. Grâce à la présence de plusieurs codes sémiotiques, elle peut, en autre, stimuler différents styles d'apprentissage, attirer l'attention des élèves et les encourager à prendre la parole, permettant à tous les élèves, même les plus faibles, d'accéder au sens du message. Sa relative brièveté, enfin, permet aux apprenants d'accéder à la totalité du texte et de le mettre en contexte, en tenant dûment compte de l'ensemble de l'œuvre.

Mots-clés

littérature ; film ; adaptation ; didactique ; FLE.

In foreign language teaching, the role of the literary text has undergone profound changes as various teaching methods have succeeded one another. In this article, we shall first reflect on the specific features of literary texts and the advantages of using them in the foreign language class, then focus on the didactic use of film adaptations, which may have a major impact on acquisition and learning. It allows, in fact, to restore the oral dimension to the written text and thus to work on multiple skills. Thanks to the presence of several semiotic codes, it can also stimulate different learning styles, attract students' attention, and encourage them to speak up, enabling all students, even the weakest, to access the meaning of the message. Finally, its relative brevity allows learners to access the full text and put it into context, taking due account of the work as a whole.

Keywords

literature; film; adaptation; language teaching; French language.

I. Littérature et didactique des langues : une relation controversée

Le rôle du texte littéraire dans les cours de langues étrangères a subi de nombreuses mutations au fil des différentes méthodes didactiques qui se sont succédé. S'inscrivant naturellement dans l'approche traditionnelle (autrement dite « méthode grammaire-traduction ») qui en louait surtout la valeur culturelle et le considérait comme un exemple que les apprenants se devaient de suivre pour maîtriser la langue[1], il est devenu de moins en moins populaire à partir des années 1960, lorsque les méthodes orales et audio-visuelles ont mis l'accent sur les besoins des apprenants. Des besoins qui concernaient uniquement la communication orale et pour la satisfaction desquels on préparait toute une série de textes fabriqués, tels que des interviews, des dialogues, des scénarios, centrés sur des échanges oraux et sur des compétences linguistiques limitées. Réduits à l'essentiel, le lexique et les structures langagières étaient ainsi répétés et mémorisés d'une manière automatique et presque inconsciente, sans aucune réflexion grammaticale ou culturelle. Perçu donc comme un intrus, le texte littéraire sort tout à coup de la scène didactique.

C'est à partir des années 1990, avec l'avènement de l'approche communicative, qu'il connaît une phase de renouveau. Élevé au rang de « document authentique »[2], il se veut un outil incontournable pour véhiculer non seulement des contenus linguistiques mais aussi des aspects culturels et sociaux. Il devient donc essentiel dans une optique interculturelle. Pour le dire avec Martine Abdallah-Pretceille: « Le texte littéraire, production de l'imaginaire, représente un genre inépuisable pour l'exercice artificiel de la rencontre avec l'Autre : rencontre par procuration, certes, mais rencontre tout de même » (Abdallah-Pretceille ; Porcher, 1996 : 2).

Malgré cette récente ouverture critique, la question de l'usage du texte littéraire en classe de langues est encore loin d'être définitivement résolue et universellement acceptée. En effet, si l'on exclut les cours de littérature, où sa présence est justifiée par les objectifs et l'orientation des cours, l'emploi du texte littéraire soulève encore de nombreuses questions chez les spécialistes (les professeurs de langues aussi bien que les chercheurs en didactique)[3] et parmi les

[1]S'inspirant de l'expérience de l'enseignement des langues anciennes et classiques, l'approche traditionnelle, dominant jusqu'aux années 1950, considérait le texte littéraire comme quelque chose de sacré. Les tons presque caricaturaux employés par Jean Peytard et Sophie Moirand (1992 : 53) à propos de certaines tendances didactiques s'adaptent parfaitement à ce cas : « [t]endance à sacraliser le texte littéraire auquel on ne touche, si l'on peut dire, qu'avec recul : repos de l'apprenti, on le lui offre à lire, à humer, à goûter, à communier avec ; le texte littéraire ne se discute pas, il se savoure par ingestion mystico-pédagogique ; le texte littéraire repose aux arcanes de son temple : contemplation recommandée ».

[2]Il ne nous semble pas vain de rappeler que, comme nous l'affirme Jean-Pierre Cuq (2003 : 29), « [l]'entrée dans la classe de langue des documents authentiques, appelés également documents bruts ou sociaux, date des années 70 avec la réflexion engendrée pour définir le niveau 2 de la méthodologie SGAV [structuro-globale audio-visuelle] ». Et c'est encore au même auteur que nous empruntons la définition de l'expression « authentique » qui « s'applique à tout message élaboré par des francophones à des fins de communication réelle : elle désigne donc tout ce qui n'est pas conçu à l'origine pour la classe » (2003 : 29). Représenté donc par un ensemble très varié de messages (écrits, oraux, audiovisuels, iconiques, etc.), le document authentique s'oppose traditionnellement au document fabriqué qui est « créé de toutes pièces pour la classe par un concepteur de méthodes ou par un enseignant » (Robert, 2008 : 18).

[3]La floraison de débats et de colloques sur le sujet témoigne de cette incertitude. Parmi les plus récents, nous rappelons la journée d'études « Littératures et FLE », coorganisée par le Département de didactique du FLE et le Service Universitaire de FLE (SUFLE) le 12 octobre 2021 à la Faculté des Arts, Lettres, Langues et Sciences humaines de l'Université d'Aix-Marseille, et le Colloque International « Didactique de la littérature en classe de FLE. Enjeux culturels, linguistiques et

apprenants, chez qui on enregistre une « baisse générale de la lecture, tous âges, tous milieux et tous niveaux scolaires confondus, [tant] chez les bons élèves que chez les moins bons » (Léon, 2004 : 5) et pour lesquels la littérature demeure, le plus souvent, une intruse[4].

II. Les spécificités du texte littéraire

Pourquoi, donc, proposer aujourd'hui la littérature en classe de FLE ? Pour répondre à cette question, nous avons recours à Yves Reuter qui essaie de dresser un inventaire des finalités et des objectifs assignés au texte littéraire :

> développer l'esprit d'analyse, développer les compétences linguistiques, développer les compétences en lecture et en écriture, développer les savoirs en littérature, développer le bagage culturel de l'élève, développer son esprit critique, lui permettre de s'approprier un patrimoine, développer son sens de l'esthétique et sa sensibilité, lui faire prendre du plaisir, participer à la formation de sa personnalité. (1999 : 197)

En effet, grâce à sa richesse, tant au niveau lexical qu'au niveau phrastique et syntaxique, le texte littéraire peut représenter, tout d'abord, un excellent support pour travailler et développer les compétences morphosyntaxiques et lexicales des apprenants, contribuant ainsi à améliorer la compréhension et la production. Les manuels *Littérature progressive du français* (Blondeau ; Allouache *et al.*, 2003) et *Littérature en dialogues* (Baraona, 2005), jusqu'au plus récent *Littérature et classe de FLE* (Fievet, 2013), édités par la maison d'édition CLE International, témoignent de cette conviction, proposant à leur public un choix de textes littéraires classés en fonction de leur difficulté progressive. Ces manuels, tout en « restaur[ant] la littérature parmi les supports d'apprentissage de langue et de culture étrangères », se proposent en effet de développer les compétences linguistiques aussi bien que culturelles, et de contribuer à donner aux apprenants le plaisir de lire (Blondeau ; Allouache *et al.*, 2003 : 3).

Et c'est aussi Amor Séoud qui revient sur ce point :

> On ne manquera pas non plus de dire que si l'apprentissage de la langue doit passer par la littérature, c'est parce que celle-ci peut susciter une appétence dont cet apprentissage a fort besoin ; que l'enseignement de la littérature dans le souci de la langue a ceci d'intéressant qu'il peut donner à l'apprentissage des langues cette dimension de plaisir qui en est absente et à laquelle il faut l'associer. (2010)

La littérature est, en effet, le lieu de « tous les possibles (acoustiques, graphiques, morphosyntaxiques, sémantiques) de la langue étrangère » et de « toutes les virtualités connotatives, pragmatiques et culturelles qui s'inscrivent en elle » (Besse, 1982 : 34). Pour

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pédagogiques », qui s'est déroulé du 3 au 4 mai 2018 à l'Université de Poitiers – Centre FLE – UFR Lettres et Langues.

[4]De nombreuses études montrent, en effet, une baisse significative de la lecture parmi les jeunes. « La démocratisation de l'enseignement, l'affaiblissement de l'exemple parental, la concurrence de la télévision ou d'autres activités de loisirs n'expliquent pas l'ampleur du phénomène », affirment en effet Françoise Dumontier, François de Singly et Claude Thélot (1990), qui continuent en disant que « D'ailleurs, cette baisse de la lecture s'inscrit dans un contexte général de baisse des pratiques culturelles "légitimes". La fréquentation des théâtres et des salles de concert a connu une évolution analogue ».

reprendre la très célèbre affirmation de Jean Peytard, « le texte littéraire est un laboratoire langagier, où la langue est si instamment sollicitée et travaillée, que c'est en lui qu'elle révèle et exhibe le plus précisément ses structures et ses fonctionnements ». Et c'est pour cela qu'il envisage la littérature « non pas, non plus, comme "supplément culturel", mais assise fondatrice de l'enseignement de la langue » (1988 : 16 et 1989 : 8). Son usage en classe de langue ne peut que contribuer à développer les compétences langagières des apprenants, non seulement dans une situation d'échange familière et naturelle, mais aussi et surtout dans une optique plus sophistiquée où la langue serait employée à des fins moins directement pratiques.

S'il est vrai, effectivement, que le texte littéraire s'inscrit d'une manière naturelle dans la pratique discursive (Maingueneau, 2007 et Maingueneau, 2020), il est vrai aussi qu'il dépasse les règles d'un échange linguistique commun, car il reste, dans une certaine mesure, autonome par rapport aux situations et aux conditions de production et de réception.

Ces spécificités dont il est porteur font du texte littéraire non seulement un outil didactique très intéressant mais aussi un véritable objet d'apprentissage. À cela s'ajoute son statut culturel qui peut aider les apprenants à prendre conscience de la diversité, à développer la tolérance et la compréhension de l'autre.

III. Quelques pistes didactiques

Mais comment proposer le texte littéraire en classe de FLE ? Et encore : quels genres littéraires choisir ? Quelles époques et quelles écoles littéraires privilégier ? Et surtout : quelle littérature préférer ? La littérature de la France métropolitaine ? Celle de la France d'outre-mer ? L'africaine ou la québécoise, ou bien la belge ou la suisse d'expression française ? Et quels auteurs privilégier ? Et, enfin, à quel niveau proposer la littérature en classe de FLE et quelles stratégies choisir ?

Évidemment, il n'y a pas de réponses certaines et univoques, la plupart de ces questionnements restant de véritables défis même pour les spécialistes. Néanmoins, pour essayer de répondre, au moins en partie, à ces questions, le professeur analysera tout d'abord le contexte d'enseignement/apprentissage pour comprendre quelles sont les caractéristiques de son public, ses besoins, les ressources dont il dispose et les objectifs qu'il se fixe.

Il faut quand même être conscient que, contrairement aux autres types de supports, le texte littéraire est un texte très riche et que, par conséquent, on ne peut pas tout travailler. Il faut donc faire des choix. Les démarches seront diversifiées selon la complexité du texte et le niveau des apprenants.

Il sera tout de même nécessaire, avant de se plonger dans la lecture du texte, d'activer la compréhension à travers « [d]es activités [qui] peuvent aider l'élève à s'orienter dans le contexte et à préparer la lecture » (Cuq ; Gruca, 2008 : 421). On pourra, pour cela, partir du titre, des sous-titres, pour essayer de deviner le contenu, et, une fois le contenu deviné, essayer d'activer les connaissances préalables sur la thématique abordée par le texte et, ainsi, anticiper les champs lexicaux qu'on va y retrouver. Ou bien, à partir du genre et de la typologie textuelle, deviner préalablement les parties qui le composent ou les informations clés auxquelles il faudrait s'attendre. Si le texte est associé à l'image, le professeur pourra partir de sa composante iconique pour inviter les apprenants à faire des hypothèses sur le contenu. Cette phase de prélecture doit susciter l'intérêt et activer les connaissances déjà acquises par l'apprenant qui sera ainsi favorablement disposé à l'apprentissage.

Une première lecture silencieuse du texte suit cette phase et permet aux élèves d'entamer la compréhension du texte. Il ne s'agit, dans cette première phase, que d'une compréhension globale que l'enseignant pourrait soutenir à travers des questions telles que : qui ? où ? quand ?

Ces simples questions permettront d'identifier le ou les protagoniste/s et les coordonnées spatio-temporelles qui seront utiles pour comprendre aussi ce qui se passe (quoi ?), pourquoi ? et comment ?

Dans cette phase, il n'est pas nécessaire de tout comprendre ; il suffira de cerner le thème principal. Une comparaison entre les réponses et les hypothèses formulées précédemment par les apprenants permettra d'établir une correspondance éventuelle ou, inversement, une opposition.

Une compréhension plus détaillée sera nécessaire dans la partie suivante du parcours didactique. L'enseignant invitera donc les élèves à relire le texte en portant une attention particulière aux mots ou aux expressions qu'ils ne connaissent pas encore. Pour les déchiffrer, ils pourront activer des stratégies telles que l'inférence, qui permet d'« utiliser les éléments connus d'un texte ou d'un énoncé afin d'induire ou d'inférer le sens des éléments nouveaux ou inconnus » (Cyr, 1998 : 50), ou la collaboration entre pairs, ou, si nécessaire, la consultation d'un dictionnaire. Pour les amener vers une compréhension de plus en plus détaillée, le professeur pourra fournir aux apprenants une grille à remplir sur les aspects (physiques mais aussi caractériels et comportementaux) des personnages ou sur les éléments et les caractéristiques du paysage décrit, les inviter à souligner les connecteurs temporels ou logiques pour mettre en évidence la progression du texte, diviser le texte en séquences pour suivre sa structure (la progression du récit ou bien la progression de la description ou de l'argumentation, ou encore de l'explication), et leur donner un texte à trous pour les aider enfin à rédiger un résumé. Une réflexion stylistique sur les registres employés, sur les figures de rhétorique et sur les effets du texte sera aussi encouragée. Pendant les activités, les élèves pourront travailler par groupes ou pourront au moins comparer leurs réponses avec leurs camarades. Le professeur évitera évidemment de corriger les élèves tout le temps. Il les invitera plutôt à reformuler ou à préciser ce qui n'est pas clair ou pas compréhensible.

La dernière étape du parcours didactique concerne d'habitude une tâche écrite. Les activités envisagées sont multiples et varient selon les objectifs visés. On pourra demander aux élèves de préparer et de rédiger une interview avec le personnage, de se mettre à la place du protagoniste et de rédiger une page de journal intime, de changer le titre du texte ou d'imaginer une autre fin.

Mais, en tous cas, c'est surtout la dimension écrite de la langue qui dominera toute la séquence didactique axée sur le texte littéraire. La didactique moderne, en revanche, est plus attentive au développement des compétences orales et à la conciliation de l'écrit avec l'oral. Le texte littéraire ne connaît, en effet, que la dimension écrite ; pour travailler l'oral, il faudrait évidemment exploiter le texte à partir d'un document sonore. Certes, beaucoup de méthodes intègrent aujourd'hui le texte avec des CD rom où l'on dispose aussi d'une lecture professionnelle des textes littéraires proposés. D'autres peuvent être facilement trouvées sur Internet. Mais, à notre avis, il s'agit d'une activité souvent décontextualisée où l'on demande aux apprenants d'accéder à la compréhension du texte à partir seulement d'indices verbaux. C'est pour cela que nous proposons d'intégrer à la pratique du texte écrit l'exploitation de l'adaptation cinématographique ; une activité qui peut s'avérer très intéressante et qui peut permettre d'obtenir des résultats tangibles en classe de FLE.

IV. La transécriture cinématographique

Fruit de l'art et du génie humain, le texte littéraire ne cesse, en effet, de circuler d'un média à l'autre, grâce à ce phénomène, complexe aussi bien que fascinant, connu sous le nom d'« adaptation ». Définie comme l'« interprétation de signes verbaux au moyen d'autres signes non verbaux », l'adaptation est appelée par Roman Jakobson (1963 : 79) « transmutation » et s'intègre, à travers l'expression « traduction intersémiotique », au phénomène de la traduction. La formulation de Jakobson a néanmoins soulevé beaucoup de doutes chez les spécialistes. C'est le cas d'Umberto Eco, lequel, bien que conscient de l'importance et de la valeur artistique et culturelle de certaines adaptations, se montre réticent à adopter pour cela le mot « traduction » qu'il préfère réserver à la traduction proprement dite (2003 : 225-253 et 315-344). Mais si beaucoup de critiques ont été soulevées par les uns, d'autres théoriciens ont apprécié l'avènement de l'intersémiose au sein des études traductives. C'est le cas de Greimas, lequel, saluant l'ouverture d'horizons extralinguistiques dans le procédé traductif, intègre la pratique traductive dans le domaine de la sémiotique, affirmant que : « C'est en tant qu'activité sémiotique que la traduction peut être décomposée en un faire interprétatif du texte *ab quo*, d'une part, et un faire producteur de texte *ab quem*, de l'autre » (Greimas ; Courtés, 1979 : 398).

Et pourtant, malgré tout cela, on remarque encore une certaine incertitude terminologique : ainsi, si Greimas préfère adopter le terme « transposition » (1966 : 14) pour désigner la transformation d'un texte d'une langue naturelle à un ordre sensoriel différent, Hjelmslev préfère adopter le mot « transduction » (Cf. 1943[1], *passim*), alors que Genette (1982 : 8) considère la transposition comme « un texte de second degré » et l'inscrit dans le phénomène de l'intertextualité.

Et si le terme « adaptation » a souvent été accusé d'ambiguïté à cause de sa double valeur de « processus » et de « produit »[5] du passage d'un média à l'autre, André Gaudreault et Thierry Groensteen proposent, en 1993, lors du colloque de Cerisy (1998), l'expression « transécriture », que nous préférons adopter.

Parmi les nombreuses études critiques qui ont pour objet la transécriture, l'un des courants les plus intéressants concerne l'exploitation du phénomène en classe de Français Langue Étrangère.

Évidemment, son usage et les activités possibles dépendent du ou des médias concernés. Dans le cas de la transécriture cinématographique, les composants extralinguistiques (l'image *in primis*, mais aussi le son, la musique et tous les éléments qui concernent la communication non verbale et le langage du corps) véhiculent autant d'informations que le langage verbal et peuvent donc aider les apprenants à accéder plus facilement au sens.

Le rapport entre littérature et cinéma a des origines anciennes. Depuis sa naissance, en effet, le cinéma s'est souvent inspiré de la littérature. Pour le dire avec Thierry Groensteen (Gaudreault ; Groensteen (éds.), 1998 : 22), « il a fallu peu d'années au septième art pour s'approprier la comédie, le récit historique, le western et la science-fiction ». Pour justifier ce phénomène, André Bazin, pionnier de l'étude comparative entre littérature et adaptation cinématographique, avance l'argument des déterminismes spécifiques à l'évolution de tous les arts, qui subissent naturellement l'influence des arts plus évolués :

[5]« Yet, however straightforward the idea of adaptation may appear on the surface, it is actually very difficult to define, in part, […] because we use the same word for the process and the product » (Hutcheon, 2006 : 15).

> Le cinéma est jeune, mais la littérature, le théâtre, la musique, la peinture sont aussi vieux que l'histoire. De même que l'éducation d'un enfant se fait à l'imitation des adultes qui l'entourent, l'évolution du cinéma a été nécessairement infléchie par l'exemple des arts consacrés. (1952 et 1958[1], 1987 : 95)

Mais cette floraison d'adaptations, d'emprunts ou d'imitations littéraires n'a pas toujours satisfait les critiques. Cette insatisfaction repose, le plus souvent, sur un jugement fondé sur une prétendue hiérarchisation des arts et sur la conviction de la supériorité de la littérature par rapport au cinéma, qui se mesure en termes de fidélité-trahison par rapport au texte de départ.

Toute adaptation pose, en effet, le problème de la fidélité, mais cette fidélité ne doit pas se transformer en servitude. André Bazin, pour sa part, avait encouragé une certaine prise de distance de la part du cinéaste par rapport au texte de départ. Dans la tentative de lui rester fidèle, le réalisateur doit s'ingénier à trouver des équivalences entre ce qui, intrinsèquement, est différent. Car, affirme-t-il,

> il est faux de présenter la fidélité comme une servitude nécessairement négative à des lois esthétiques étrangères. Sans doute le roman a ses moyens propres, sa matière est le langage, non l'image […]. Mais justement, les différences de structures esthétiques rendent plus délicate encore la recherche des équivalences, elles requièrent d'autant plus d'invention et d'imagination de la part du cinéaste qui prétend réellement à la ressemblance. (1958[1], 1987 : 95)

Et il continue en ajoutant que « [p]our les mêmes raisons qui font que la traduction mot à mot ne vaut rien, que la traduction trop libre nous paraît condamnable, la bonne adaptation doit parvenir à restituer l'essentiel de la lettre et de l'esprit » (*Ibid.*).

Tout jugement doit donc reposer sur la connaissance et sur l'évaluation des atouts et des spécificités de chaque média. André Gaudreault et Philippe Marion, pour leur part, mettent en garde les critiques sur le fait que toute transécriture comporte « une série de contraintes "informantes" et "déformantes" » dues à la « "médiativité" ("médialité" ?) » (Gaudreault ; Marion, 1998 : 31) de chaque média, c'est-à-dire à ses caractéristiques qui constituent la véritable identité de tout système de signes. En d'autres termes, tout échange intersémiotique implique la nécessité pour l'adaptateur de transformer l'œuvre de départ pour la rendre conforme au système de signes d'arrivée.

Le cinéma est, en effet, un système hybride où plusieurs messages se combinent. La présence du code iconique permet au cinéma de s'affranchir, au moins en partie, de la linéarité qui est typique du code verbal, le déchiffrement duquel se fait essentiellement sur la dimension linéaire. « Il est généralement convenu que la lecture est un processus linéaire et que le lecteur prélève des indices sur la page au fur et à mesure qu'il avance, en suivant le fil du texte ligne après ligne », affirmait déjà Christian Vanderdorpe (1999 : 41). Mais dans la réception des séquences vidéo, le regard du spectateur peut se déplacer d'un côté à l'autre de l'écran, attiré parfois par des indices qui peuvent aident à deviner le contenu du message verbal. La réception de la vidéo suit donc une dimension hétérogène qui contraste avec la linéarité du texte écrit.

V. Littérature et film en didactique des langues : une combinaison à explorer

Mais quels sont les avantages de l'usage de l'adaptation cinématographique en classe de FLE ? Tout d'abord, le cinéma peut restituer au texte écrit sa dimension orale et permettre

donc de travailler aussi bien la compréhension orale que la phonétique. Mais ce n'est pas tout. Le cinéma offre une expérience multisensorielle qui permet de satisfaire les différents styles d'apprentissage des apprenants. Grâce à sa composante visuelle et auditive, il consent aux élèves d'accéder plus facilement au sens du message et cela peut représenter un atout, surtout pour les étudiants plus faibles qui peuvent compter ainsi sur des codes diversifiés pour comprendre le texte. Cela s'avère très utile aussi aux apprenants qui souffrent d'un trouble d'apprentissage tel que la dyslexie (Cf. Metz-Lutz, 2004), pour lesquels l'emploi exclusif du code écrit constitue, surtout dans la classe de langue étrangère, un obstacle majeur. Et encore, il peut permettre aux élèves d'accéder à la totalité du texte, alors que, dans l'espace d'une unité d'apprentissage, il serait question tout simplement d'un extrait. Cette vue d'ensemble permettra donc de restituer au texte choisi son intégralité, de le mettre en contexte et de l'analyser d'un point de vue plus large, en tenant dûment compte de l'ensemble de l'œuvre.

La vidéo, en outre, s'avère toujours très efficace pour attirer l'attention des élèves ; elle peut motiver les apprenants et les encourager à prendre la parole. L'enseignement du FLE a donc tout à gagner de la possibilité offerte par l'usage du cinéma qui peut avoir des retombées importantes en termes d'acquisition et d'apprentissage.

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